

RACE AND COUNCIL HOUSING IN HACKNEY

COMMISSION
FOR RACIAL
EQUALITY



Report of a Formal Investigation

conducted by the Commission for Racial Equality
into the allocation of housing in the
London Borough of Hackney



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- (a) working towards the elimination of discrimination
- (b) promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups generally; and
- (c) keeping under review the working of the Act, and, when required by the Secretary of State or when it otherwise thinks it necessary, to draw up and submit to the Secretary of State proposals for amending it.

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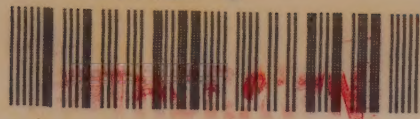
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PREFACE

Research has shown that ethnic minorities have been widely discriminated against and disadvantaged in the public housing sector. The Commission therefore decided at an early stage in formulating our strategy on housing to initiate a wide-ranging investigation into the public housing sector. An important part of this work was to establish the extent to which ethnic minority disadvantage in public housing was the direct result of discrimination, as distinct from the indirect effect of local authority allocation policies and practices. Hackney, as an inner-city area with a large ethnic minority population, was considered to be a suitable and representative borough on which to concentrate a comprehensive investigation of the causes of such discrimination and disadvantage.

We embarked on a formal investigation into the allocation of council housing in the London Borough of Hackney in May 1978. Our terms of reference, which were drawn up under Section 49(3) of the Race Relations Act 1976, were as follows:

To inquire into the allocation, disposal and management of local authority housing accommodation and the provision of housing services and facilities by the London Borough of Hackney by themselves, their servants or agents to the residents of the Borough with particular reference:

- (a) to the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination within the meaning of the Race Relations Act 1976;
- (b) to the promotion of equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups within the meaning of the said Act; and
- (c) to the arrangements made by the Borough pursuant to the duty imposed by Section 71 of the said Act.

Before embarking on the investigation, we held discussions with both Councillors and officials in Hackney and in the course of these the Council proposed an alternative approach to the question, whereby they would set up their own internal housing and race relations monitoring unit to work with us on a cooperative basis, rather than the Council being made the subject of a formal investigation. While we welcomed this initiative and expressed the hope that such a unit would be set up, we nevertheless decided that the investigation should proceed. It was also our view that if we found unlawful discrimination, the results of this type of exhaustive study of one borough's housing allocations could subsequently be used as a basis for persuading other local authority housing departments throughout the country to develop their own effective equal opportunity programme.

The investigation was concerned with three distinct areas. Firstly, the allocation of patterns of housing cases from the waiting list, transfers, homeless and decant categories, were reviewed over the years 1978 and 1979. Secondly, two poor-quality estates with a high ethnic minority population were studied, in order to determine the factors behind the allocation of tenants to them. Thirdly, the role of the Greater London Council in rehousing a sample of homeless cases from Hackney was examined, also for the period 1978-9. We were therefore concerned with reviewing patterns of allocations for seven distinct populations.

We considered the results of the investigation in September 1982, and provisionally formed the view that the Council had unlawfully discriminated against black applicants and tenants in housing allocations. The basis of the Non-Discrimination Notice, which was subsequently issued and became final on 22 June 1983, was that the Council had been found to have practised unlawful direct discrimination against black applicants and tenants who had been allocated housing from the waiting list, or who had been homeless or decant cases, in that whites had received better-quality allocations of properties than blacks. The finding, in relation to the homeless and waiting list cases, was also supported by evidence obtained in relation to the allocation patterns that had occurred on two individual estates in Hackney.

In order that the borough could comply with the non-discrimination notice, the Commission made specific recommendations. These included:

- (a) the keeping of ethnic records and their subsequent monitoring;
- (b) the setting up of relevant training programmes;
- (c) a review of procedures and practices operated and the criteria used in assessing which applicants and tenants would be offered available property;
- (d) the allocation of a senior official in the housing department, who would be responsible for ensuring the Council's compliance with the non-discrimination notice and the 1976 Race Relations Act generally.

In May 1983 a final notice under the Race Relations Act was issued against Hackney, the contents of which are attached to the report (Appendix D).

It is worth noting that an important precedent was set in issuing this non-discrimination notice against Hackney Council, in that it is the first time such a notice has been issued solely on the basis of statistical evidence. Until now, findings of discrimination have generally been centred on individual acts of discrimination. The practical difficulty of relying on this approach is that the scope for comparison, to determine whether there has been less favourable treatment on racial grounds, is necessarily narrow. When one finds less favourable treatment there will often be factors present which might appear to explain away the differences on non-racial grounds. However, when large numbers of cases are examined statistically, and less favourable treatment of a racial group is established, and one then examines all possible non-racial explanations statistically, it becomes possible to say with statistical certainty whether they can in fact explain the difference. In practice, non-racial explanations start falling away when subject to this kind of scrutiny. This is the reason why the Commission is insistent that ethnic record keeping and monitoring are essential to securing equality of opportunity, not only in the housing field, but elsewhere. And it is for this reason also that this investigation represents a significant milestone on the long road toward eliminating racial discrimination.

Hackney's response to our provisional, and then final, finding of discrimination has been extremely positive, and at a council meeting on 22 December 1982, the Chair of Housing Services said:

The CRE has made it clear that what is happening in Hackney is most likely the pattern in most urban authorities . . . The Council should accept the report fully, should implement its recommendations, and should continue to support to the very fullest the efforts of the CRE in seeking to stamp out racial discrimination.

Since then the Council has initiated a number of moves to comply with our recommendations, including the introduction of ethnic records and monitoring, as well as a thorough review of their various housing policies and practices. The final chapter of this report provides a detailed breakdown of the changes that Hackney is implementing in response to the results of the investigation.

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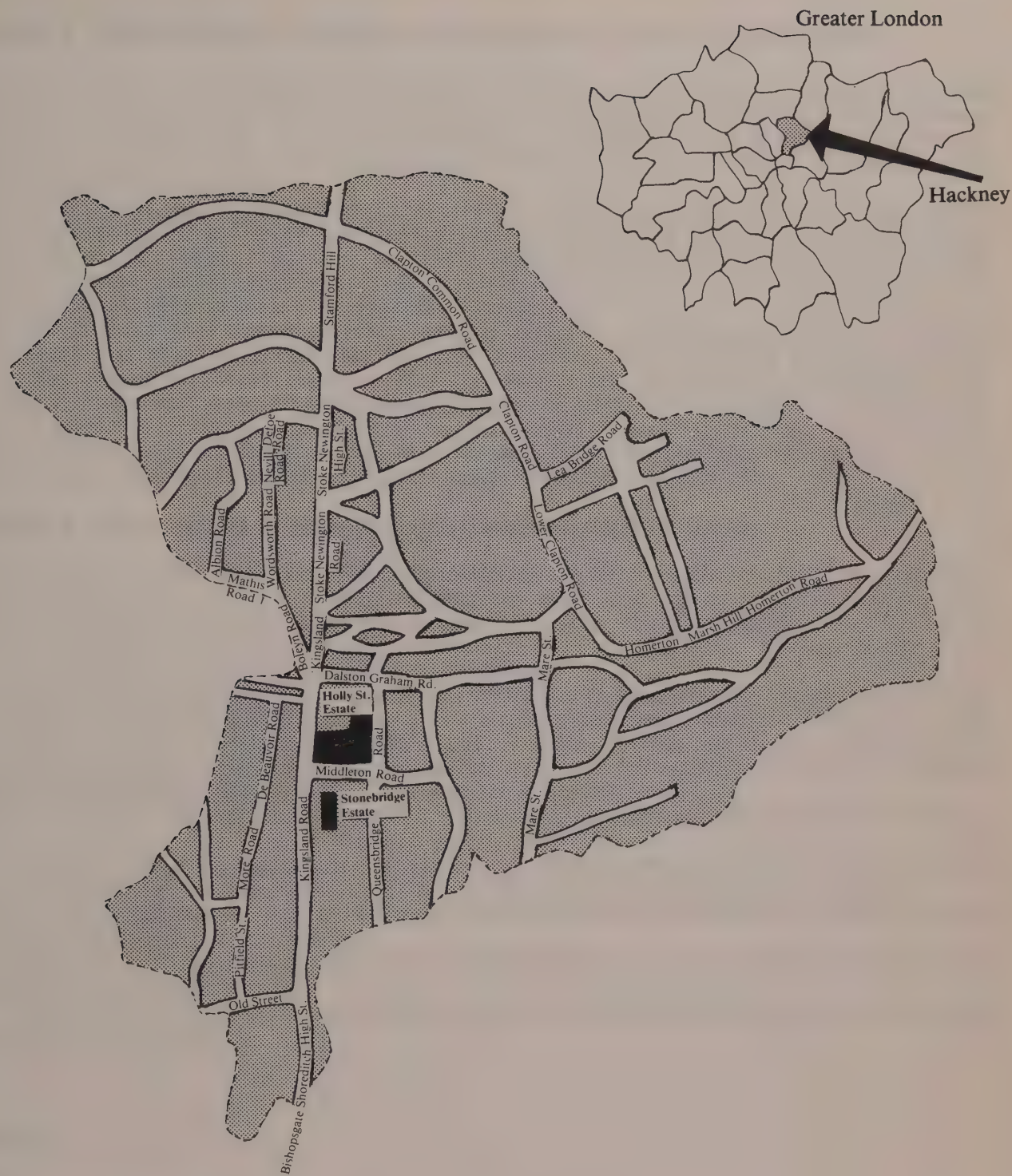
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London Borough of Hackney

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Chapter I Background to Hackney: Housing Stock, ethnicity and lettings

Hackney is one of the most economically deprived areas in Britain, showing all the stresses and extremes common to a majority of our inner cities, including high unemployment, overcrowding, poor housing conditions and few amenities. The borough's population is heavily dependent on the council sector for the provision of housing, and Hackney has one of the highest proportions of municipal housing in both Greater London and the country.

Ethnic minorities, among whom West Indians are the largest single group, form over 25 per cent of Hackney's population, and are now numerically well represented in council housing, with similar proportions to white tenants. However, the 1977 National Dwelling and Housing Survey showed that in Hackney ethnic minorities generally lived in poorer conditions than white tenants in the council sector, being more likely to live in over crowded accommodation.

Since 1978 Hackney has faced a worsening supply of available council housing, with the result that its ability to rehouse borough residents has markedly diminished. The number of allocations made to waiting list, transfer and decant cases has fallen over recent years, while the number of homeless cases has steadily risen over the same period, reflecting a growing extent of housing need. In order to cope with this high level of demand, Hackney, like other housing authorities, has had to decide between relative housing priorities, which in turn has had implications for the speed with which offers of accommodation have been made, as well as the quality of accommodation on offer.

Chapter 2 The conduct of the investigation and its methodology

As already mentioned, we looked at three distinct areas during our investigation. Firstly, the allocation patterns of housing cases from the waiting list, homeless, decant and transfer categories were examined in 1978-9. Secondly, two poor-quality estates with large ethnic minority populations were studied, in order to determine the factors which led to the allocation of tenants to them. Thirdly, the role of the GLC in rehousing a sample of homeless cases was examined.

The aim of our investigation was to determine the different types and quality of properties allocated to ethnic minority and white applicants and, at the same time, identify the factors which may have influenced the types of allocations received. One of the major problems confronting us was that Hackney did not keep ethnic records, and, therefore, a survey involving interviews with all the tenants included in our samples had to be undertaken, to establish ethnicity.

Our analysis of allocations involved collecting and merging information from four different sources:

- (a) interviews with housing department staff and a review of committee papers and internal instructions, in order to determine how the allocation process worked at both the formal and informal levels;
- (b) extraction of information from the Housing Department files of all tenants in our samples, to show how the allocation process had operated;
- (c) interviews with all tenants in our samples to determine their ethnic origin and perceptions of contact with the Housing Department; and
- (d) extraction of information from the Hackney property record system to provide basic data on the quality of property allocated.

Part II

Chapter 3 The waiting list

Our sample showed that 49 per cent of waiting list allocations were to white applicants, 45 per cent to black applicants, and the rest to Greek/Turkish and 'other' categories. We found that white applicants were more likely to have received better quality properties compared with black applicants in that:

- (a) Amongst white applicants, 16 per cent received houses, 19 per cent maisonettes and 65 per cent flats, whereas among black applicants, four per cent received houses, 11 per cent maisonettes and 85 per cent flats. When maisonettes and houses were combined, 15 per cent of black applicants received these type of properties compared with 34 per cent of white applicants. In fact, of all houses, maisonettes, and flats allocated to black and white applicants, 79 per cent of houses were allocated to whites compared with 21 per cent to blacks; 64 per cent of maisonettes were allocated to whites compared with 36 per cent to blacks; and 46 per cent of flats were

allocated to whites compared with 54 per cent blacks.

(b) A larger proportion of white applicants received new properties, whilst black applicants tended to be allocated to a particular group of inter-war properties that had been modernised, but to a relatively low standard. Of white applicants, 25 per cent were allocated new properties, compared with three per cent of black applicants, while by comparison, 24 per cent of black applicants were allocated to inter-war properties, compared with seven per cent of whites. Eighty-eight per cent of all new properties allocated to the waiting list consequently went to white applicants, and 75 per cent of the inter-war properties went to blacks.

(c) A larger proportion of white applicants was allocated to ground or first-floor accommodation compared with black applicants.

Chapter 4 The homeless

Forty-six per cent of homeless applicants in our sample were black and 46 per cent were white, the rest being in the Greek/Turkish and 'other' categories. White homeless applicants received better-quality property in that they were more likely to receive houses, while black homeless cases received a greater proportion of flats; black applicants were more likely than whites to receive properties above the fifth floor when they were allocated flats.

Chapter 5 Decants

Amongst decant cases in our sample, 41 per cent of allocations made were to black tenants and 55 per cent to whites. Again we found that white tenants received better-quality accommodation in that they were more likely to receive new property while black tenants were more likely to receive the less desirable acquired properties. The main difference in the letting of new property occurred in relation to flats, where 45 per cent of whites allocated this type of accommodation received new property compared with only four per cent of blacks, virtually all of whom received old or acquired property.

Chapter 6 Transfers

Of transfer cases, 71 per cent were white, 24 per cent black and the rest were Greek/Turkish or 'other' categories. We found no significant difference between white and black transfer cases in relation to quality of property allocated. A close examination was made of tenants' reasons for transfers, and their knowledge and perception of the transfer process. There were few significant differences between black and white tenants. The main pattern that did emerge was a significant correlation between over crowding as a reason for transfer and the ethnicity of tenants. This relationship also emerged from the interviews with tenants in other access channels, and reflected the relatively poor housing position of black tenants in Hackney as shown by National Dwelling and Housing Survey data.

Part III

Chapter 7 The allocation process

This section of the report is concerned with reviewing some of the factors which may have had a bearing on the process by which allocation decisions were made, leading to the patterns that consequently emerged in each of the access channels. Factors ranged from the formal system and the measurement of factual data, such as whether there were rent arrears, or reference to medical requirements, to less formal indicators involving assessment by housing officers using their own judgement or experience.

Chapter 8 Collection of information: 'formal' data

This chapter deals with information on rent arrears and medical requirements, factors which might provide some explanation for different patterns in quality of allocations. Our results showed that the presence or absence of rent arrears did not explain the difference in types of quality received by black and white applicants. When both had good rent records, black applicants still received poorer-quality properties in the three access channels where discrimination was found. The results of our analysis of medical data showed that white applicants and tenants more often had references to medical needs on their files than black applicants and tenants, with the exception of homeless cases. However, it appeared that many of these applicants and tenants may have used references to medical needs as an extra 'bargaining' counter in order to try and obtain better accommodation. However, in relation to the actual allocations made, we found that there was no significant correlation between reference to medical factors and the quality of the property allocated.

Chapter 9 Assessment of applicants by the housing department

Here the results of our analysis of visiting officers' assessments of applicants' and tenants' housekeeping standards and suitability for property of a particular type is set out. This part of the allocation process covered the two main variables operating in what we have called the 'informal system', in that no specific guidelines or training were given to officers about how applicants and tenants should be assessed, or the standards to be applied. In the absence of any method for standardising assessments, it was inevitable that individual officers would be called upon to exercise their own judgement and discretion.

Our results showed that black applicants and tenants generally were less likely to receive the best gradings and recommendations than white ones, although there did not appear to be a direct link between the way they were graded and the quality of the property they received. However, while allocating officers did not always appear to take account of 'assessments' by housing visitors, the way in which such factors as housekeeping standards were recorded gave some insight into the perception of housing department officers, particularly in the way they assessed black and white applicants and tenants. We considered that the difference in assessments, with whites doing better than blacks, reflected a conscious or unconscious stereotyping process, whereby black applicants possibly received less positive and less favourable treatment.

Chapter 10 Area preference, offers and refusals

Two of the factors which could have resulted in black applicants receiving more poor-quality property than whites, were the role of expressed geographical preferences and the number of offers of accommodation made and refusals allowed. In fact, our analysis shows that these factors did not explain the different patterns of allocation between blacks and whites. The results also showed that black and white applicants generally in their respective access channels appear to have been treated in the same way by the housing department in relation to these two areas. However, as is common elsewhere in the report, we were concerned here about the unstructured and discretionary way in which the preference area and offer and refusal systems worked in practice, and we make some recommendations on this.

Chapter 11 Determination of ethnic origin from review of tenants' files

Hackney housing department did not record the ethnic origin of applicants and tenants at the time of our investigation and it was felt at the outset that if discriminatory or disadvantageous, patterns of allocation were established, the question would arise as to how the housing department might have known such origins. We therefore decided that when we were extracting data from tenants' files, we would attempt to record whether ethnic origin might be assessed either from references on the files or by guesswork. We recorded two items of information, firstly the ethnic origin of the applicant or tenant if it was in any way suggested on the file. Secondly, the reason we thought the applicant or tenant was of this ethnic origin.

Our results showed that we correctly identified ethnicity for tenants from the files to a quite remarkable extent (60 per cent of black tenants were correctly identified). The number of such correct identifications for black tenants was particularly high, the majority of these being based on specific references to racial origin. In fact, we found that 38 per cent of all black tenants included in the survey had some *specific* reference to ethnic origin on their file. As we say in the report, we believe that these results provide a strong argument for formal ethnic record keeping, and subsequent monitoring.

Part IV

Chapter 12 The Stonebridge and Holly Street estates

Chapter 13 The estates and the allocation process

We included a detailed study of two poor-quality estates in Hackney in order to provide some historical perspective to the main study of allocations, in terms of the end results of the borough's allocation policies over a period of years. Stonebridge is an old estate built mainly before the second World War, whereas Holly Street was only completed in 1970-1. It had nevertheless developed serious problems, mainly attributable to poor original design.

In relation to the *Stonebridge* estate, a picture emerged of a place from which relatively large numbers of white applicants had left over a number of years, to be replaced disproportionately by black tenants. This trend continued between 1977 and 1980, particularly in relation to applicants from the waiting list. In

addition, large numbers of single-parent homeless black families had been allocated to the estate. When the 'process' prior to allocation was examined, the results showed that a high proportion of the white tenants allocated were 'poor' tenants (as defined by Hackney) in that they tended to have had rent arrears or been made homeless because of eviction for rent arrears, or to have been graded as having 'poor standards'. In our view, therefore, there was some 'rational' connection between these 'poor standards' white tenants and the fact that they were allocated to one of the poorest estates in Hackney. This pattern did not occur for black tenants, that is, they had not had such a high proportion of rent arrears, nor had they received such 'poor' grades, and we decided that ethnic origin was a causal factor in their allocation to this estate.

The increase in the proportion of black tenants in *Holly Street* estate started at a later stage than in Stonebridge, and was most marked between 1977 and 1980. Tenants from the waiting list formed the majority of all allocations, and of these, 77 per cent were black, although only 45 per cent of our waiting list sample was. All allocations to the estate from the other three access channels were to black tenants. Although over the whole period 1970-80 there were some differences between black and white tenants in terms of the assessment of housekeeping standards and recommendations for suitability for property type, these differences were based on the early years of allocation (1970-7) and, as with Stonebridge, did not, therefore, explain the over-representation of black tenants among allocations between 1977 and 1980.

The results covering these estates formed part of the supporting evidence for the non-discrimination notice issued against Hackney for the waiting list and homeless access channels.

Chapter 14 The role of the Greater London Council in Hackney's homeless allocations

Nominations to the GLC were included in the investigation because a relatively large proportion of Hackney's homeless cases had been rehoused through this channel. The results showed that a high proportion of Greek and Turkish applicants had been allocated to GLC properties and there appeared to be no reason for this which related to Hackney's policy on nomination. We also found that ethnic minorities had been allocated by the GLC to pre-war properties in much large proportions than white homeless cases. We believe that these results further emphasise the need for record keeping and adequate monitoring, particularly as Hackney is now responsible for the GLC properties. While the GLC itself was not the subject of our investigation, we also consider that in the light of our results, it should review its own policies and procedures, although we recognise that its housing role has diminished.

Part V

Chapter 15 The issue of a non-discrimination notice: the Commission's findings and the Council's response

We refer in detail here to the Commission's findings and its recommendations to Hackney Council. We also refer to the Council's response to the results of our investigation. As we show, Hackney's response has been very positive, with the recommendations contained at the end of this report currently being introduced by the Council.

PART ONE

- 1. BACKGROUND TO HACKNEY: HOUSING STOCK, ETHNICITY AND LETTINGS**
- 2. THE CONDUCT OF THE INVESTIGATION AND ITS METHODOLOGY**

1. Background to Hackney: Housing Stock, Ethnicity, and Lettings

1.1. Our formal investigation into the allocation of Council housing in the London Borough of Hackney was initiated as one aspect of the CRE's programme of work in the public housing field. The Commission recognised that research published in the 1970s showed clearly that ethnic minorities were concentrated in the poorest-quality council housing. Among the most important studies of this period were those produced by the PEP,¹ Runnymede Trust,² the GLC³ and the London Borough of Islington.⁴

1.2. The Runnymede Trust report, for instance, showed that higher proportions of households with both parents born in the New Commonwealth (BPBNC) lived in pre-war inner London flats, and that a very low proportion lived in the more attractive outer London borough cottage estates. It also found that there were 23 times as many BPBNC households living in pre-war flats as in modern homes. The GLC and Islington studies of their own allocations found that non-white applicants were more likely to be given the older and poorer-quality stock, with the GLC study finding this happening within access channels as well as between them. For instance even among homeless applicants, who as a group were generally given the most undesirable accommodation, black applicants received poorer-quality allocations than white ones.

1.3. Other more recent studies, in Lewisham,⁵ and Wandsworth,⁶ in London, and outside the capital in Bedford,⁷ Birmingham,⁸ and Nottingham,⁹ have confirmed the pattern that black applicants seem either to have difficulty in obtaining access to council housing, or consistently receive poorer-quality accommodation than white applicants.

1.4. We therefore decided at an early stage of our strategy formulation on housing work that we should initiate a wide-ranging investigation into allocations in the public housing sector. A major element of this work was to establish the extent to which ethnic minority disadvantage in the allocation of council housing was the direct result of discrimination as distinct from the indirect effect of local authority allocation policies and practices. It was our view that in order to achieve general equality for ethnic minorities in housing it would be necessary to identify and eliminate whatever elements of direct discrimination existed, as well as overcome any structural constraints in allocation systems which adversely affected a disproportionate number of ethnic minority families, and which could not be justified.

1.5. We felt that an investigation into the housing allocation system of one London borough would enable a detailed examination of the possible cause of ethnic minority discrimination and disadvantage to be carried out and, as there was sufficient similarity between the allocation policies and practices of most London boroughs and many local authorities throughout Britain, the results could also be used to develop promotional exercises and campaigns with local authorities throughout the country. The London borough of Hackney, as an inner-city one with a high level of public housing, as well as large numbers of ethnic minorities in its population, was chosen as our subject.

Hackney: A Brief Profile

Background

1.6. The London borough of Hackney is situated to the north-east of the centre of the city, and is an amalgamation of the previous metropolitan boroughs of Stoke Newington, Shoreditch and Hackney. It shows all the stresses and extremes that are common in the majority of British inner city areas. For example, results from the 1981 Census,¹⁰ show that it has one of the highest unemployment rates in London, at over 18 per cent of the population; that this rate is steadily rising; that large numbers live in over-crowded accommodation (9.0 per cent); that 11.9 per cent of its households lack the exclusive use of a bath and an inside wc; and that the area proportionally contains the largest number of single-parent families (10.6 per cent) in the country.

1.7. The population of the borough is heavily dependent on the Council for its housing, and Hackney has one of the highest proportions of municipal housing in Greater London or indeed in Britain. The municipalisation of housing in the borough continued throughout the 1970s, and the 1977 National Dwelling and Housing Survey (NDHS)¹¹ showed that 56 per cent of all households lived in the council sector compared with the 1971 census figure of 43 per cent. NDHS data showed that the comparable

proportions of people living in council housing in the Greater London area were 31 per cent, with 30 per cent throughout Britain.

1.8 Until 1981, over 60 per cent of the council stock in the borough was owned by the local authority (37 per cent of all housing in Hackney), the rest being owned by the Greater London Council. Since that date Hackney has also been responsible for GLC property as a result of its policy of handing over the majority of its dwellings to individual local authorities. In the other housing sectors, according to NDHS data, 13 per cent of the borough's population were owner-occupiers, while 24.5 per cent lived in privately rented accommodation with six per cent falling into other categories, such as housing associations.

1.9 At the beginning of the 1980s, Hackney owned over 27,000 properties throughout the borough (not including GLC properties). These were made up of 3,000 individual houses built before the First World War and bought by the Council; 2,500 flats on estates built by the Council between the wars, and 21,500 flats and houses on estates built by the Council since 1945. The largest proportion of the housing stock is flats, constituting 80 per cent of all property types, with only seven per cent of Hackney's properties being purpose-built houses with gardens. The borough's stock is varied in quality with a fair proportion in a relatively poor state of repair. Hackney estimated in 1980 that about 1,000 of its pre-war flats needed modernisation, or, in some cases, demolition, and that about 9,000 units on post-war estates required comprehensive repairs or improvements. It also stated in a council committee paper that 'many of the older estates (pre-war) and those built into the 1960s are high density and have high child densities too. They are hard to manage and a substantial proportion are "difficult-to-let" (over 4,000, or nearly 20 per cent).' The relative quality of properties was reflected in parts of the results of the National Dwelling and Housing Survey, which showed that in Hackney, in comparison with the majority of other London boroughs, there was a high level of tenant dissatisfaction. Over 20 per cent of tenants were not satisfied with their accommodation and over 40 per cent did not like the area in which they lived. The latter figure was significantly higher than any other borough in London, and probably reflects dissatisfaction with the generally poor environment of many of the estates in Hackney.

Ethnic distribution

1.10 NDHS statistics show that in the late 1970s ethnic minorities formed over 25 per cent of the population of Hackney, one of the largest proportions in any local authority in the country, with West Indians, Africans and Asians constituting 19.5 per cent. West Indians were the largest group among the ethnic minorities, at 13 per cent, the largest concentration of West Indians in any London borough. Asians made up 3.5 per cent and 3 per cent were of African origin.

1.11 Ethnic minority representation in the Council sector broadly reflected the proportion living in the borough. According to NDHS data, 14.5 per cent of all Council stock was let to West Indians and 18.2 per cent to West Indians, Africans and Asians combined. Table 1.1 shows the relative proportions within the white and ethnic minority groups living in the different tenure types.

Table 1.1 Tenure Patterns and Ethnicity

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Owner- occupiers</i>	<i>Council sector</i>		<i>Rented sector</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
		<i>LBH</i>	<i>GLC</i>			
White	12	38	21	23	6	100
West Indian	26	39	21	9	5	100
Asian	48	16	7	24	5	100
African	35	28	21	13	3	100

Source: NDHS

1.12 Table 1.1 shows that West Indians were generally well-represented in the Council sector in that 39 per cent of this ethnic group lived in Hackney property and a further 21 per cent in GLC property. This proportion was very similar to the relative percentages of white tenants living in the public sector.

More Asians are owner-occupied nationally and the figures for Hackney reflect this trend. Of Asians in Hackney 48 per cent were owner-occupiers, while 33 per cent lived in public housing, 16 per cent in local borough properties.

1.13 The various samples taken during the course of our investigation confirmed the patterns shown by NDHS data in that ethnic minorities, the majority West Indian, were highly represented in the different housing categories as well as on the individual estates we considered.

Table 1.2 Sample Survey Types: Ethnicity

Sample Type		Black	White	Greek/Turkish	Other	Total
Homeless	%	46	46	5	3	100
	No.	89	89	11	6	195
Transfers	%	24	70	6	3	100
	No.	48	139	6	5	198
Waiting list	%	45	49	5	1	100
	No.	89	96	10	2	197
GLC	%	33	46	21	0	100
	No.	27	17	17	0	81
Stonebridge estate	%	45	48	6	1	100
	No.	96	103	13	2	124
Holly Street estate	%	46	49	3	2	100
	No.	71	77	5	3	156
Decants	%	41	54.5	4	0.5	100
	No.	99	133	10	1	243

Table 1.2 shows the racial distribution for each sample type in our study. West Indians, Asians and Africans (the group defined as black) were highly represented in our samples, often representing nearly 50 per cent of total allocations. Further reference to the ethnic distribution is made throughout this report, as we deal with the specific results of the study.

Housing conditions: ethnicity

1.14 There is little specific data on the housing conditions of ethnic minorities in Hackney apart from that produced by the NDHS. When broken down between the variables of housing conditions in relation to ethnicity, the NDHS data is not entirely reliable because of the relatively small sample size. The data should therefore be approached with some caution. However, despite these reservations, it is valid to consider the data in terms of trends, and Tables 1.3 - 1.7 below provide useful information on some basic patterns that emerge on housing conditions in Hackney. They refer to several ethnic groups but, because the NDHS is only a 10 per cent sample, and also because of the relatively small number of Asians and Africans at present in Hackney, it is advisable to concentrate on the results in relation to those groups who are defined as white and West Indian tenants. The tables show some key indicators of housing conditions both in relation to tenants living in the privately rented sector (relevant background information on tenants entering council housing for the first time), and on Council sector housing conditions themselves. Owing to the way in which the NDHS data has been produced, these latter tables include both Hackney and GLC-owned properties.

1.15 Tables 1.3 and 1.4 below give details of conditions in the privately rented sector. Table 1.3 refers to bedroom standard, which is a measure of whether households are short of living space (that is, below the bedroom standard), or have spare rooms (above the bedroom standard). The table reveals that West Indians were more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation with 22 per cent living below the

bedroom standard compared with 13 per cent of white tenants. Table 1.4 refers to the use of amenities (that is, whether families have sole use of toilet/bathroom facilities or have to share them with others), and again the figures show that West Indians lived in worse accommodation than white tenants. Forty-three per cent of white tenants had sole use of amenities compared with 26 per cent of West Indian tenants, and 56 per cent of West Indians had to share amenities, compared with 28 per cent of white tenants.

Table 1.3 Privately Rented Sector in Hackney: Overcrowding Measured by Bedroom Standard

<i>Bedroom standard</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>West Indian</i>	<i>African</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Below	13	22	15	36	24	15
Equal to	63	70	79	55	64	63
Above	24	7	5	9	12	21
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: NDHS

Table 1.4 Privately Rented Sector in Hackney: Use of Amenities

<i>Amenities</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>West Indian</i>	<i>African</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sole use	43	26	8	35	36	40
Some shared, none lacked	28	56	66	43	43	33
Some lacked	29	18	26	22	21	27
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: NDHS

1.16 Tables, 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7 refer to data on conditions in Council housing itself. Table 1.5 shows that West Indians were more likely to live in pre-war accommodation; 38 per cent lived in pre-1940 dwellings, compared with 21 per cent of the white sample. Table 1.6 refers to bedroom standard and reveals that West Indians were more likely to live in pre-war accommodation; 39 per cent lived in pre-1940 dwellings, compared with seven per cent of white tenants. These last were more likely to live in accommodation with room to spare; 36 per cent of them lived in accommodation above the bedroom standard, compared with 15 per cent of West Indians. Finally, Table 1.7 refers to floor levels in relation to flats and maisonettes, and shows that white applicants were more likely to live on the ground floor level, arguably the more popular and ‘desirable’ level, while West Indians tended towards concentration on higher floor levels. However, this latter pattern may in part be explained by different age structures within the two groups, in that there was a great proportion of elderly tenants among the white groups than among the black group. It might, therefore, be expected that a higher proportion of white tenants would be allocated to lower floor levels because of decreasing mobility due to age.

1.17 Generally, however, the tables below tend to show that at the time of the NDHS survey,, West Indian tenants were living in poorer conditions in the public sector than white tenants. As will be seen from Chapters 12 and 13, our analysis of two poor-quality estates in Hackney confirmed this pattern, and the results of our allocation survey during 1978 and 1979 (where different and more detailed quality indicators were used) show that black applicants continued to be allocated to poorer-quality accommodation.

Table 1.5 The Council Sector: Age of Property (%)

<i>Age of property</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>West Indian</i>	<i>African</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pre-1919	7	10	13	10	10	7
1919-1939	14	29	28	27	31	18
1940-1964	48	28	29	16	34	44
Post-1964	31	33	30	47	28	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: NDHS

Table 1.6 The Council Sector: Overcrowding as Measured by Bedroom Standard (%)

<i>Bedroom standard</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>West Indian</i>	<i>African</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Below	7	16	7	29	11	8
Equal to	57	69	78	65	64	60
Above	36	15	15	12	25	32
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: NDHS

Table 1.7 The Council Sector: Floor Levels of Tenants Living in Flats or Maisonettes (%)

<i>Floor level</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>West Indian</i>	<i>African</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Ground and below	27	19	10	13	26	25
1st -3rd floor	51	50	55	50	52	51
4th-9th floor	17	21	15	33	18	18
10th and above	5	10	20	4	4	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: NDHS

Lettings: priority access channels: allocation strategy

1.18 The Council recognised in a 1981 strategy statement that its main concerns were, firstly, an acute and growing shortage of housing units to let to those in housing need; secondly, the deteriorating conditions in both the public and private sector; and, thirdly, the need for a large and sustained programme of capital investment by the borough which in its view had been lacking for some years. The fact that the Council sector was the largest housing source in the borough but had been under-resourced in terms of maintaining the available stock, naturally had an effect on what it could actually offer any group applying for housing. The number of households suffering from housing stress, and in need of housing or a Council transfer, was far in excess of what was available. Hackney itself cited the fact that the size of its waiting list has averaged over 10,000 in recent years, and continues to grow, as an illustration of this trend. The Council has attempted to respond to the housing situation in two main ways in recent years. Firstly, it recognised the need to build new properties, and, throughout the 1970s, including 1978 and 1979, a number of new properties had been completed and were available for allocation. Secondly, the Council had undertaken a major modernisation programme of existing Council-owned properties. Both of these programmes, however, have had to be reviewed, amended or

postponed in the light of increasing public expenditure restrictions. The Council has also become increasingly aware that some of its earlier modernisation schemes were under-resourced or inadequately planned, resulting in poor-quality building and renewal work on some of the estates. A number of these estates were an important factor in relation to some of the results which emerged during the course of our investigation, and they are referred to in greater detail in the course of this report.

1.19 Like other London boroughs, Hackney has been faced with a shortage of housing, so Council housing provision must be seen in the context of different groups competing for a scarce resource. Hackney, has responded, in common with other housing authorities, by setting its own rehousing priorities. This has had implications both for the speed with which offers of accommodation have been made, and for the quality of the housing on offer. The relative 'bargaining' power of different groups of applicants and tenants has been an important factor, particularly in relation to the quality of properties allocated, and full account of this influence is taken throughout this report.

1.20 Hackney's letting policy revolves around its own defined priority system as it relates to particular groups of applicants and tenants. The system has not changed fundamentally in recent years, and that outlined by Hackney in April 1982 in a paper to the housing committee also applied to the years covered by our sample survey of allocation, 1978-9.¹² The order of priorities, which determines speed of allocation, is outlined below. (The terms, decants, homeless etc., are called access channels and this is how we will refer to these categories throughout this report):

(i) *Decants*: The term 'decant' is applied to a variety of cases where the local authority rehouses people because their existing accommodation in the public or private sector needs to be vacated to enable it to proceed with site development or improvement/modernisation programmes, or because the property, or part of it, is unfit for habitation, and the necessary building work or repairs cannot be carried out at reasonable cost while the occupants continue to live there. Deadlines for these tenants moving out of their accommodation are often imperative, as building work has already been contracted or planned in detail. The great majority of the decant cases allocated properties during the period of the investigation were existing local authority tenants who had been decanted because of modernisation programmes concerning Council-owned property.

(ii) *Priority health and social cases*: These are ones who have been identified as transfers and applicants whose situation gives them overriding priority for consideration for rehousing. They are closely monitored by the housing department, and health cases are only authorised by the Council's medical adviser, the District Medical Officer.

(iii) *Priority homeless*: These are cases covered by the definitions in the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 and they have relative priority because of the obvious urgency of their housing requirements combined with the Council's desire to minimise the costly use of bed-and-breakfast hotels and other temporary accommodation.

(iv) *Transfers*: These are existing Council tenants who wish to move to other accommodation within the Council housing sector. During the period of our study, Hackney had defined criteria by which tenants were accepted for consideration as transfer cases.

(v) *Waiting list applicants*: Hackney operates a points system based on housing need, and applicants requiring housing are assessed by the housing department and then placed on the list according to their points total and required bedroom category. Applicants are then generally offered property in points turn.

(vi) *Miscellaneous, non-priority homeless, etc.*: Hackney also has a number of other groups, such as key workers, health service staff, non-priority homeless, etc. who constitute a relatively small proportion of the total allocated accommodation. Many of the properties offered to these groups falls into the 'difficult-to-let' dwellings category.

1.21 Apart from priority defined in terms of the *speed* with which offers are made, it can also be defined in relation to the relative *quality* of properties allocated. While such a definition cannot be exact because different priorities may sometimes receive a 'mix' of properties, the general pattern in Hackney for the four main access channels, is, from best to worst decants, transfers, waiting list and homeless. This order reflects the general 'bargaining' power of tenants in terms of their being in a position of having to accept, or being able to refuse an offer of accommodation. Further reference to these priorities is made in various parts of this report.

Supply of lettings

1.22 The number of waiting list, transfer and decant allocations made has gradually reduced over the latter part of the 1970s. The pattern of homeless allocations however, while remaining at a fairly constant level from the mid - to the end of the decade, has increased steadily in the ensuing years, and this access channel by 1981 represented 26 per cent of all allocations. Part of the reason for this increase was that

the number of available GLC properties reduced sharply in 1979 and this created even greater pressure for the limited local borough stock, particularly as the GLC had previously rehoused a high proportion of Hackney's homeless cases. (The role of homeless nominations to the GLC is dealt with in Chapter 14).

1.23 During the years from which we selected our sample of allocations, waiting list allocations constituted the greatest proportion of local borough allocations (27 per cent) closely followed by decants (23 per cent), then transfers (19 per cent) and priority homeless (17 per cent). Health and social cases and 'other' groups constituted eight per cent and six per cent respectively. Our sample survey of allocations concentrated on the four main access channels; further details on methodology are given in the following chapter.

NOTES

1. David Smith and Anne Whalley, *Racial Minorities and Public Housing*, PEP, 1975.
2. Runnymede Trust, *Race and Council Housing in London*, 1975.
3. Greater London Council, *Colour and the Allocation of GLC Housing*, Research Report 21, 1976.
4. London Borough of Islington Directorate of Housing, *Allocation of Islington Housing to Ethnic Minorities*, Research Report 12, 1977.
5. London Borough of Lewisham, *Black People and Housing in Lewisham*, Report to housing committee, 1980.
6. London Borough of Wandsworth, *Report by the Director of Housing on Housing Department Ethnic Monitoring*, Report to housing committee, 1979.
7. Richard Skellington, *The Housing of Minority Groups in Bedford*, Open University Urban Research Group, 1980.
8. Hazel Flett, *Black Council Tenants in Birmingham*, Research Unit on Ethnic Relations Working Paper, 1979; Hazel Flett, Jeff Henderson and Bill Brown, *The Practice of Racial Dispersal in Birmingham 1969-75*, Journal of Social Policy 8, 3, 1979.
9. Alan Simpson, *Stacking the Decks - A Study of Race, Inequality and Council Housing in Nottingham*, Nottingham and District CRC, 1981.
10. 1981 Census: Information obtained from an analysis undertaken by the Inner-Cities Directorate, Department of the Environment, Information Note No. 2 'Urban Deprivation', 1983.
11. Department of the Environment, *National Dwelling and Housing Survey*, 1977.
12. During the latter part of 1983, Hackney has undertaken a thorough review of its allocation procedures, including reference to its priority system. It is likely that some changes will be introduced as a result of this, and that some of the basic systems for the various rehousing categories (for example, the points system) will be amended.

2. THE CONDUCT OF THE INVESTIGATION AND ITS METHODOLOGY

2.1 As part of our initial examination of the allocation process in Hackney, we obtained a breakdown of the number of allocations made by access channel. These figures showed that more than 85 per cent of all allocations made went to just four access channels, that is, the waiting list, homeless, decants and transfers. We therefore decided to concentrate our sample survey of allocations on these four groups, covering both entry into the Council sector for the first time (waiting list and homeless cases), and movement within the system by existing Council tenants (decants and transfer cases). The other relatively major areas of allocation which we did not include in the study were the priority health and social cases, partly because these formed a fairly small proportion of all allocations made in 1978 and 1979 (eight per cent) but, most importantly, because of the individual nature of such cases. We considered that the detailed analysis required of individual cases in order to compare adequately the experience of different applicants would be prohibitive in terms of resources.

2.2 One of the major problems which arose at the beginning of our investigation was the question of whether, and on what basis, the Commission would be given access to tenants' files. These contained essential information on the decision making that surrounded tenants individual allocations. Initially, the Council stated that tenants' files were confidential, and would not be made available to us unless a subpoena was served. As the terms of reference for this investigation were drawn up under S 49(3) of the 1976 Act, use of subpoena powers required the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment. The Commission's legal advice at that time indicated that, before such a request was likely to be granted, it would need to show that it had taken all reasonable steps to gain access to the necessary information without subpoena powers.

2.3 After lengthy discussions, it was finally agreed in September 1979 that tenants' files would be made available to the Commission after certain information, which tenants and applicants might regard as confidential, had been removed. Such information included medical details and doctors' letters, details of certain personal family circumstances, and letters from tenants and applicants themselves, neighbours or other voluntary agencies. The Council's four district housing officers were to process the files in accordance with this agreement and record the type of documents removed before they were passed to Commission officers. The provision of the files of applicants and tenants included in the Commission's sample survey of allocations started in 1980, and the relevant files had been made available by September 1981. The analysis of the sample survey results could not commence until data from the files of all applicants and tenants included in the samples had been extracted and fed into a computer.

2.4 Apart from a detailed review of each of the major access channels, we also included a study of two related but conceptually distinct subject areas. These were:

(a) An examination of the role of nominations made by Hackney to the Greater London Council. During 1978 and 1979 a considerable proportion of Hackney applicants was allocated property by the GLC. Following a detailed review of the pattern of allocations made by it, a sample of homeless applicants nominated to it were included in the detailed survey.

(b) We also examined allocations on two individual estates which were known to be environmentally in poor condition and which had high proportions of black tenants living on them. We included these estates in order to give some historical perspective to the general allocation survey in terms of tracing the process by which large numbers of black tenants came to be living on particularly undesirable and poor-quality estates. We felt that a detailed study of this type would provide graphic illustration on the final results of the discriminatory or 'disadvantageous' allocation policies that may be found to be occurring, from the results of the general access channel survey.

2.5 Several estates were considered for this aspect of the investigation, on the basis of their generally recognised unpopularity and relatively poor quality, as well as the high representation of ethnic groups among the tenants. The Holly Street and Stonebridge estates were chosen because, in addition to fulfilling the criteria outlined above, they had the advantage of being different in terms of age and size of population, and could therefore provide an interesting basis for comparison. The first, Stonebridge, was a pre-war estate with 310 dwellings divided among various low-rise blocks, while Holly Street was relatively large, with over 1,000 dwellings, and was a mixture of tower-blocks and low-rise 'deck access' dwellings. Holly Street was quite new in that it was completed at the end of the 1960s and very early 1970s. It had, however, a number of fundamental design faults which had resulted in serious problems and rapid deterioration of some areas.

2.6 In effect, therefore, the investigation was concerned with considering seven distinct populations. Our aim was both to determine the different types and qualities of properties being allocated to white and

ethnic minority applicants in each sample type, while at the same time, identifying those factors which may have influenced the type of allocations. These ranged from such formal 'objective' variables as family types and point levels (in relation to waiting list applicants), to more informal 'subjective' measurements such as the grading of housekeeping standards, officer recommendations, the amount of tenant choice permitted, etc. One of the major problems that confronted us was that Hackney did not keep ethnic records and, therefore, from the very beginning it was clear that a tenant survey would have to be undertaken in order to establish the ethnicity of tenants so that comparisons between racial groups could be made.

Method of Analysis

2.7 We were concerned with analysing the way in which the housing department operated, both in relation to formal procedures and practices as well as the way in which these were interpreted at officer level, the 'informal' structure. This was undertaken by analysing housing committee papers, internal instructions, where they were in existence, and relevant statistics. Housing officers working at each of the stages prior to allocation were then interviewed to determine their particular function and role within the department, as well as in order to discover the ways in which they may have used any discretionary powers. At the end of this process a fairly clear picture of the way in which the organisation functioned emerged. We also developed some understanding of the informal mechanisms of the department, that is, the way things actually worked at officer level from day to day. Brief papers were then written on the way the system operated, and the Hackney housing department subsequently agreed that the description given in these papers was broadly correct.

2.8 Appendix A provides detail of the basic methodology used in the course of the study and covers sampling and administration of the questionnaire, the questionnaire itself, interview response rates and reasons for non-productive interviews, computer methods and testing of data. What follows here therefore, is concerned with providing a brief outline of the substantive background to the methodology of the study and making broad reference to the main areas that were included in the analysis of data.

THE SAMPLE

2.9 As each of the four access channels are fairly distinct in terms of their policies and procedures, as well as having different priorities attached to them by the housing department, they have each been treated as a distinct entity during the course of the investigation.

2.10 For the four major access channel surveys, and GLC homeless nominations, a two-year period (1978-79) was taken, and details were obtained for it of all allocations, along with nominations to the GLC. A total of 1,050 allocations was randomly sampled from the four access channels, with roughly similar proportions present in each channel. Because of the relatively small number of large bedroom allocations made, (4,5 and 6 bedroom categories) however, these reflecting in part the shortage within the local authority of this type of accommodation, arrangements were made to ensure that an adequate number of such units was included in the samples. In the case of the GLC homeless nominations, all allocations were randomly sampled in order to constitute a final sample of 150.

2.11 A different sampling base was used for the two individual estates. On the smaller, Stonebridge estate, all tenants as of January 1981 were included. On the large Holly Street estate, a random sample of 200 tenants was taken, at the same time, from a list of all addresses. The two individual estates' samples therefore included long-term tenants as well as those who had only been recently allocated to them.

2.12 Considerable re-working had to be undertaken after the initial tenants were sampled because we discovered that some of the original samples were inaccurate in that the named tenants did not live at the relevant addresses. Careful checks were maintained at this stage in order to prevent any bias occurring in the final samples. (Appendix A provides details of this). The *total* named sample number with the addresses of all the tenants included in the study eventually amounted to 1,682 housing cases. The percentage of successful interviews in terms of being 'in scope' and willing to be interviewed was an overall average of 77 per cent, and the final number of successful interviews amounted to 1,292 tenants.

Sources of Data Information

2.13 The data on housing cases in our samples came from three sources. Firstly, information was from tenants' files; secondly, the results of interviews with tenants and, thirdly, from Hackney's own property records. The last was used particularly in relation to details about properties that had been allocated to individual tenants.

Tenants' files

2.14 Information that was common to all tenants in the various samples was obtained from their files and included, for example, such items as length of residence, the assessments made by housing officers (housekeeping standards, etc), family types, offer and allocation data and rent payment history. Apart from this common information collected for all tenants, data specific to particular groups of tenants were also recorded. For example, information was obtained about temporary accommodation provided to homeless cases, 'need points' were collected in relation to waiting list applicants, and the reasons for transfer applications were recorded for transfer tenants.

2.15 A record was also kept for all sample types of whether the ethnicity of applicants could be determined from the files. (As mentioned, Hackney does not formally record the ethnicity of applicants and tenants on its files). Data were also noted on whether the 'perceived' ethnicity was by specific reference on the files (for example, 'family from Pakistan'), or whether it was based on an assumption, for instance, a deduction based on the name of an applicant or tenant. These were later matched up with the actual ethnicity recorded during interviews. (Chapter 11 refers to the results of this exercise).

Tenant interview survey

2.16 An interview survey was conducted with all the tenants in the various samples. The aim of this was to determine the ethnicity of the particular tenants, as well as to ask them a number of questions about their individual experience of the allocation process. Owing to the different sample types, with their often distinct procedures and background, separate questionnaires were required for various groups of tenants, although many of the questions were common (the questionnaire for the waiting list transfer and decant channels is attached - Appendix A).

Information relating to properties allocated to tenants

2.17 The final area of data collection, which was fundamental to the study, was the collation of material that could provide a means of comparing the relative quality of the properties allocated to individual applicants. Since Hackney did not have any comprehensive 'quality indicator' system, a method of our own had to be devised. The majority of the data used came from Hackney's own computerised property records, allied with data obtained from the manual property card system.

2.18 Several different quality indicators were considered for use but some had to be discarded because they were unreliable in one way or another. The final measures of the quality of property which we adopted as a basis for comparison between the different allocations made in our main study were type of property, age of property and floor level. In relation to type of property, we considered houses to be the most desirable, followed by maisonettes and then flats. While we were aware that sometimes there was little difference between the 'quality' of some flats and maisonettes situated on higher floors, we considered that overall maisonettes were closer to houses in terms of desirability, than to flats. On other property measures we considered newly-built property to be more desirable than older property, particularly the poorly-modernised inter-war estates, and lower floor levels, particularly ground and first-floors, to be more desirable than higher floors. It was necessary when making comparisons between such a large number of allocations to adopt generally applicable scales of quality. While these may not have held good for every allocation made, it was our view that for most council tenants a newly-built house by definition on low floor levels, was the most popular type of allocation. Details of these different property quality measures are as follows:

- (a) *Property types*: These included whether a property was a house, flat or maisonette.
- (b) *Floor levels*: Data was obtained in relation to flats and maisonettes on the respective floor levels of allocations.
- (c) *Age coding system*: This system was constructed on some basic data obtained from Hackney and also from some additional information, including details of the acquired and requisitioned stock, inter-war modernised estates etc. The categories were broken down into the following types:
Pre-war: Pre-1919, 1920-30, 1931-9

Post-war: 1948-52, 1953-8, 1959-69, 1970-5. Although the age of properties could be defined in terms of the decade in which they had been built, for our purposes they are aggregated as pre-war and post-war.

New: Post-1976

Inter-war: Modernised estates (Hindle, Wigan, Shacklewell, Nisbet)

Alexandra House: A predominantly single-person development

Acquired: The great majority of acquired properties in our sample were older ones which had been bought by Hackney over a number of years, or requisitioned during the war.

2.19 Most of these codes are self-explanatory but as this 'age-grading' system is an important component of our property quality scheme, additional details are given on particular categories.

2.20 *Alexandra House:* This was a large block converted into single-person dwellings, to which a substantial number of allocations were made during the period of the sample survey. As Alexandra House did not fit into any convenient age category, and the 'family type' allocated to the property is very distinct, a separate code was allocated to it so that these allocations did not distort survey results.

2.21 *New:* Since the late 1960s in particular, and until relatively recently, there has been a substantial Council building programme in Hackney. Some estates built in the late 1960s and early 1970s have proved to have various design faults of differing severity, and have relatively quickly become 'undesirable' and 'unpopular'. Some of these estates, despite their relative newness are already the subject of various proposed and active improvement schemes. (One of these that falls into this category is the Holly Street estate). As there was frequently a distinct qualitative difference between some of these post-1970 properties and those that had been very recently completed at the time of the allocation study, the 'post-1976' (New) code was added to the age code system. Since the period of the sample survey, further design problems have emerged on some of these estates, but *at the time* they were new and could be defined as 'desirable'.

2.22 *Acquired:* This code applies mainly to houses that have been acquired by Hackney at various times by direct purchase, acquisition under various sections of the Housing Acts, or by war requisition. The majority of the houses in our sample were pre-First World War, and many of them were in relatively poor condition. Housing committee reports have shown that substantial resources are needed to improve many of these dwellings. It should be noted that more recently, and particularly since our survey, some of these acquired properties have been modernised, and can now be considered as good quality and desirable accommodation.

2.23 *Inter-war modernised:* This code covered four estates: Hindle, Wigan, Shacklewell and Nisbet, which are pre-Second World War ones, which, having been previously decanted and modernised, were actually being 'let' during the period of our sample survey. There had been considerable criticism of the standard of the modernisation work, with resulting difficulty in letting them, expressed both by the officers we interviewed and in papers put to the housing committee. For example, in a report to a joint special housing committee in July 1980, it was pointed out in connection with problems the Council had had with funding from the Department of the Environment, that 'Nisbet and Shacklewell together with Hindle House and the first phase of Wigan have been completed to much lower standards than the Council would have wished.' ¹ The Director of Housing has also said in a report that: ²

Even though tenants with few other choices will move into the pre-war estates following improvement to a low standard, is it appropriate, given the opportunity of bring standards up to a much higher level, to maintain such wide differentials in standards between pre-war estates and other Council accommodation? If it is appropriate to deliberately pursue a policy of differential standards, then the physical, social and economic implications need to be clearly understood by members, officers and tenants alike.

2.24 Given the background to these estates, allied with the facts that firstly, they did not fit conveniently into the age coding system, and, secondly, that allocations constituted a fair proportion of our samples, a specific coding categorised as 'inter-war modernised' estates was included; this is referred to as 'inter-war'.

2.25 Finally, basic property quality data was collected on GLC dwellings. This data was obtained from the GLC's own computer base and provided a more sophisticated and reliable source of information than Hackney could provide in relation to its own property.

2.26 All the information from these three different data sources, that is, file data, the interview survey

and Hackney’s own computer and property record data, were later stored in computer files and the various information sources ‘merged’ in relation to each individual applicant or tenant. Appropriate tables were then produced, giving the results which are the subject of this report. All the tables that were analysed were tested for their significance, and where a significant distribution was found, further tests were undertaken to determine the main statistically distinct factors for each table. All factors that were found to be significant have a reference to the level of this. In each table, and generally, the level of significance we use is based at the one per cent or five per cent levels. Occasionally we refer to tests at the 10 per cent level, which we refer to as an indication of a particular trend. Where there is no reference in the tables to levels of significance, the table is not significant. It can also be noted that we do not refer generally to ‘not-knowns’ unless they are required for interpretation. The number of ‘not-knowns’ obviously differed widely, depending on the data we were using and how we used the different variables in conjunction with one another.

Ethnicity

2.27 Details of the way in which ethnicity was recorded and aggregated and the different proportions of ethnic groups present in the seven sample types are given in Appendix B, as well as being referred to throughout the text. As mentioned in Chapter 1, West Indians constituted by far the largest proportion of ethnic minorities present in our various sample types. Africans, Greeks, Turks and Asians formed the much smaller remaining proportions of ethnic minorities present in the samples.

2.28 In this report we have aggregated West Indians, Asians and Africans together as ‘black’. We have generally treated people of Greek and Turkish origin, most of whom, in Hackney, come from Cyprus, as a separate group, although occasionally they have been aggregated with ‘blacks’ to constitute an ‘ethnic minority’ category, for example, in Chapter 12. Whites are an aggregation of ‘UK white’, ‘Eire’, ‘Jewish’ and ‘Other European’, while the remaining groups, (for example, ‘Middle East’, ‘South Americans’) have been categorised as ‘other’.

Family types

2.29 Finally we refer to ‘family type’, which is one of the key variables in our analysis of survey data, because any differential patterns found in the allocation of properties might be ‘explained’ by the numbers of particular family types present in the racial group. For instance, groups containing a high proportion of large families are more likely to be allocated houses than flats, or a group with a fair proportion of pensioners may be more likely to receive a ground-floor accommodation because of health factors.

2.30 Full account has therefore been taken of this variable throughout the report. The following categories are used: single or married couple pensioners, single persons, other households/no children; 1 adult/1 or 2 children, 2 + adults/1 or 2 children; 1 adult/3 + children; 2 + adults/3 + children. The distribution of these family types within the different samples are given throughout this report.

NOTES

1. *An Alternative Strategy for Pre-War Estates*; Report of the Director of Housing to the joint special committee, 14 July 1980.
2. *Development Options in Pre-War Estates*; Housing Development Committee, December 1978

PART TWO

3. THE WAITING-LIST

4. THE HOMELESS

5. DECANTS

6. TRANSFERS

3. THE WAITING LIST

3.1 In this chapter we shall first outline how the housing allocation process operated in Hackney in relation to waiting list applications, from the point of initial registration to allocation of a property. We will then present our results showing the comparative quality of accommodation allocated to the black and white groups in our sample. Finally we will examine whether the major variable of family type provided any explanation for differences in the quality of accommodation allocated.

3.2 We would stress that the allocation procedures described in this chapter are those which were operating in 1978 and 1979, the period from which our samples were chosen. Hackney have made a number of changes to their procedures since then, which are described in Chapter 15. We would also emphasise that our waiting list sample was selected only from those cases who had actually been allocated housing in 1978 or 1979 and did not include people who were still on, or entered, the waiting list during that period.

3.3 People rehoused through waiting lists are new entrants to Council housing. Many of them register for local authority accommodation either because they have inadequate or poor-quality private sector accommodation, or because they have no separate accommodation of their own, or because the tenure of their existing accommodation is insecure. As can be seen from Table 1.2, our sample showed that black applicants were highly represented (45 per cent) among tenants rehoused from Hackney's waiting list, particularly when this figure was compared with NDHS data, which showed that in 1977, 19.5 per cent of the borough's population was of West Indian, Asian or African origin, the group described as 'black' in our report. The relatively high level of black representation among rehoused waiting list applicants was, in our view, understandable when considered in the context of the NDHS data set out in Chapter 1, showing that this group was more likely than white tenants to live in overcrowded conditions and to share basic amenities, rather than having sole use of such facilities.

Access to the waiting list

3.4 Registration on Hackney's waiting list is open to any adult borough resident, with or without a family, and to married service personnel wishing to settle in the borough. Owner-occupiers are eligible to register but cannot be rehoused without the approval of the chair of the housing management committee. In order to be eligible for active consideration for allocation of accommodation after 1 April 1978 applicants had to have completed one year's residence in the borough, either before or after their date of registration. Before 1 April 1978 this residential qualification was three years in the borough or five years in the GLC area, with the last of these five years in Hackney.

The preliminary processing of waiting list applicants

3.5 Application forms were initially dealt with at the housing centre in Hackney, where applicants could obtain advice about housing options available to them from housing advisers. Applicants who went to the centre were generally encouraged to complete waiting list application forms which were then passed to the application and pointing section of the housing department.

3.6 The application form used by Hackney has changed very little since 1965. It contains basic information about family size and membership, details of present accommodation, previous addresses, income and any special needs, for the housing department to make an initial assessment of the applicant, provisionally award points and decide the relative priority for a home visit to be carried out. Highly pointed applicants in each bedroom category would be recommended for a home visit; serious medical cases would be referred to the District Community Physician to assess urgency and, where appropriate, award additional medical points; some low pointed applicants might be referred to the officer responsible for allocating 'difficult-to-let' property under the schemes mentioned in paragraph 3.9 below; and applicants who did not meet the one year residential qualification would be deferred until they did.

Priority within the waiting list

3.7 Relative priority within the waiting list was, and still is, assessed on the basis of a points system awarding points, for example, to those who live in overcrowded conditions or lack or share amenities. Points totals in the main reflect relative degrees of housing need, those applicants having the highest points totals being rehoused first. According to the DOE Housing Services Advisory Group Report *Local Authority Access and Allocation Policies* (1978), 50 per cent of local authorities use some form of points scheme, including almost all the major metropolitan authorities. The points system in Hackney, while predominantly based on need, has other factors built into it. An additional two points are awarded for each year of completed registration on the waiting list. An additional 10 points are awarded where parents or children resident in Britain are forced to live separately, due to lack of accommodation. The Council's medical adviser may award up to 25 points for medical needs, and the Chief Environmental Health Officer may award up to 10 points to reflect poor conditions in an applicant's existing property. Finally, the Housing Manager may award up to 10 points for 'any other special reason'.

3.8 Hackney, in common with many local authorities, has faced an increasing waiting list at the same time as public expenditure restrictions have reduced the Council's ability to build more accommodation. The growing number of homeless cases and tenants decanted as a result of estate modernisation programmes have taken an increasing proportion of available property, with the results that fewer waiting list cases have been housed, and the minimum points levels required before offers of accommodation were made have steadily increased. For example, for three-bedroom accommodation in April 1978, the minimum points level was 15; by January 1979 it had risen to 64; and in October 1979 it rose again, to 88. Minimum points levels similarly increased for all property sizes, except in relation to four-bedroom accommodation, where the minimum level actually fell, from 110 points in April, to 95 points in December 1979.

3.9 Hackney also operated various special schemes which largely functioned outside the points system and which, in effect, allocated housing which was otherwise 'difficult-to-let' to waiting list applicants with relatively few points, as well as to some engaged couples and single persons. The effect of these schemes on allocation patterns has been taken into account by assessing whether, at the time of allocation, applicants' points totals were above or below the totals normally required for properties within each bedroom category of accommodation.

The effect of criteria for waiting list registration and the points system on black and white applicants

3.10 Many local authorities impose conditions of one kind or another which must be met before access to their housing list is permitted, or applicants are actively considered for offers of housing. Residential qualifications and the award of additional points for length of residence in the area, or time spent on the waiting list, are commonly-used methods by which preference is given to local residents. Some limitation is also imposed on the potential demand for rehousing through the waiting list. Although it could be argued that such conditions have the same impact upon all newly-arrived households, whether they come from other parts of Britain or from abroad, the PEP Report *Racial Minorities and Public Housing* (1977) showed that ethnic minority households formed a large proportion of the most recently-arrived households in particular areas and, thus, were disproportionately affected by these conditions. Requirements which have a disproportionately detrimental effect upon particular racial groups may constitute indirect discrimination under the Race Relations Act 1976, unless they can be justified on non-racial grounds.

3.11 As mentioned in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.7 above, at the time of our study Hackney operated a residential qualification¹ and also awards points for time spent on the waiting list. In our survey, therefore, we collected information to show the length of residence of the different racial groups in our sample who were rehoused from the waiting list and the comparative periods of time they had spent on it before being rehoused, in order to determine whether, in Hackney, these conditions had any indirectly discriminatory effects.

3.12 Table 3.1 shows how long the black and white applicants in our sample had lived in the borough prior to being re-housed.

Table 3.1 Length of Residence Prior to Re-Housing: Families Rehoused From the Waiting List, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Length of residence</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Less than 1 year	7	6	12	11	10	17
1-2 years	7	6	1	1	4	7
2-3 years	15	13	7	6	10	19
3-4 years	4	4	7	7	6	11
4-5 years	6	5	2	2	4	7
5-10 years	41	36	25	23	33	59
more than 10 years	20	18	46	42	33	60
	100	88	100	92	100	180

A large proportion of both the black and white applicants who were rehoused by Hackney had lived in the borough for more than five years - 61 per cent of the black sample and 71 per cent of the white sample - although, as might be expected, a higher proportion of white applicants had lived there for the longer period of more than 10 years. For periods of less than five years' residence, there were no significant differences between the racial groups. In our view, therefore, the borough's residential qualification of one year did not appear to have had a disproportionately adverse effect on black applicants, although we would stress that these results only relate to applicants who had been rehoused, and may not be representative of applicants on the list who were still waiting for accommodation.

3.13 The periods of time spent by black and white applicants on the waiting list before they were rehoused are shown in Table 3.2. The great majority of all applicants in our sample had been allocated housing within three years of their registration on the waiting list, and there were no significant differences between black and white applicants in this respect. The majority of applicants rehoused from the waiting list had not remained on it for a long enough period to accumulate sufficient waiting time points, awarded at the rate of two per year, to fundamentally influence their overall points total. However, as with length of residence, our results may not be representative of all the cases which were still on the list. We would recommend, as did the DOE Housing Services Advisory Group, that care should be taken when monitoring applicants to ensure that points awarded for time on the list does not upset the basic principle of giving the greatest priority to those in greatest need.

Table 3.2 Time From Registration to Re-Housing: Families Rehoused From the Waiting List, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Time spent on waiting list</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Under 6 months	13	12	16	15	15	27
6-12 months	13	12	12.5	12	13	24
1-2 years	51	45	40	38	45	83
2-3 years	11	10	8	8	10	18
3-5 years	7	6	6	6	6	12
5-10 years	5	4	5	5	5	9
Over 10 years	0	0	12.5	12	6	12
	100	89	100	96	100	185

3.14 As we mentioned in paragraph 3.8, the minimum points levels above which applicants in each bedroom category received active consideration were changed a number of times during 1978 and 1979. However, a monthly comparison of the points totals of black and white applicants in each bedroom category immediately prior to their allocation revealed no differences between the two groups. The great majority of all families housed had more than the minimum points level prevailing at their time of allocation and, among the small numbers who were allocated property with less than the minimum points, there were very similar proportions of black and white applicants. We concluded, therefore, that the operation of the various special schemes for allocating difficult-to-let property, mentioned in paragraph 3.9, had not been a major factor influencing the quality of accommodation allocated to waiting list applicants.

The home visit, and offers and allocation of accommodation to waiting list applicants

3.15 The home visit, where applicants were seen in their current homes by a housing visitor, fulfilled a variety of functions: verification of details, discussion of applicants' preferences, and assessment of applicants' home standards and suitability for different types of Council property. The information gathered as a result of the home visit played a key part in determining the accommodation offers that applicants eventually received. This subject and the final stage of the allocation process, when offers were made and property allocated, are discussed in detail in Chapters 7 to 10. We shall first, however, deal with the fundamental question of whether there were any differences in the quality of accommodation allocated to black and white waiting list applicants.

The quality of accommodation allocated to waiting list applicants

3.16 As outlined in Chapter 2, the measures of property quality which we used in our study were based on property type, age of property and floor levels.

Property type

3.17 The first quality variable we examined was the type of property allocated, that is, whether the property was a flat, maisonette or house. Table 3.3 shows the type of property allocated overall to our sample of rehoused waiting list applicants, and Table 3.4 shows how these property types were distributed between black and white applicants.

Table 3.3 Type of Property Allocated to Waiting List Applicants

<i>Type of property</i>	<i>Waiting list applicants</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>
Flats	74	145
Maisonettes	16	31
Houses	10	21
	100	197

Table 3.4 Type of Property Allocated to Waiting List Applicants, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Type of property</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Flats	85	75	65	63	75	138
Maisonettes	11	10	19	18	15	28
Houses	4	4	16	15	10	19
	100	89	100	96	100	185

Notes: (i) The difference in the allocation of houses between black and white applicants is significant at a five per cent level of confidence
(ii) The difference in the allocation of flats compared to houses and maisonettes combined between black and white applicants is significant at a one per cent level of confidence

3.18 Table 3.3 shows that a large proportion, 74 per cent, of all the housing stock allocated to our waiting list sample was flats. Only 10 per cent of allocations were to houses, with 16 per cent to maisonettes. However, Table 3.4 shows that, within the waiting list sample, a substantially greater proportion of black applicants than white was allocated to flats, (85 and 65 per cent respectively). Only four per cent of black applicants received houses and 11 per cent maisonettes, compared with 16 per cent of white applicants (houses) and 19 per cent (maisonettes). Because the numbers of black and white applicants in our sample were very similar, we would have expected an equal proportion of properties of each type to be allocated to black and white applicants, but we found that of all the houses, maisonettes and flats allocated to waiting list applicants the distribution was:

houses: 79 per cent to whites, 21 per cent to blacks,
maisonettes: 64 per cent to whites, 36 per cent to blacks, and
flats: 46 per cent to whites, 54 per cent to blacks.

Age of property

3.19 The second quality indicator we examined was the age of property allocated and Table 3.5 shows how black and white applicants were distributed between differently aged property.

Table 3.5 Age of Property Allocated to Waiting List Applicants, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Age of property</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pre-war	3	3	1	1	2	4
Post-war	38	34	37	35	38	69
Post-1970	18	16	19	18	19	34
New	3	3	25	23	14	26
Alexandra House	7	6	7.5	7	7	13
Inter-war	24	21	7.5	7	15	28
Acquired	7	6	3	3	5	9
	100	89	100	94	100	183

Notes: (i) The difference in the distribution of new properties in relation to black and white applicants is significant at a one per cent level of confidence
(ii) The difference in the distribution of inter-war modernised properties in relation to black and white applicants is significant at a one per cent level of confidence

3.20 The majority of all waiting list allocations was to post-war or post-1970 properties, and similar proportions of black and white applicants received these. However, nearly a third of properties allocated were either new or on the inter-war estates, and it was in these latter two categories that significant differences emerged. Whereas 25 per cent of white applicants were allocated to new property, only three per cent of black applicants received new accommodation. This position was reversed in relation to the less desirable inter-war estates, to which 24 per cent of black applicants were allocated, compared with 7.5 per cent of whites. Again, because the numbers of black and white applicants in our sample were very similar, we would have expected an equal proportion of properties of each age to be allocated to blacks and whites if there were no discrimination. However, of all the new property allocated to waiting list applicants, we found that 88 per cent went to white applicants, and only 12 per cent to blacks. Of all the inter-war properties allocated to waiting list applicants, 25 per cent went to white applicants and 75 per cent to blacks. This was very strong evidence of discrimination.

Floor levels

3.21 The third quality measure we considered was the floor level to which applicants were allocated and Table 3.6 shows the distribution for black and white applicants. Houses were excluded from this analysis because floor level was not relevant to this property type.

Table 3.6 Floor Level of Property Allocated to Waiting List Applicants, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Floor level</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Ground and 1st floor	19	16	34	27	26	43
2nd-5th floors	64	54	40	32	53	86
6th-19th floors	17	14	26	21	21	35
	100	84	100	80	100	164

Notes: (i) This table includes flats and maisonettes only; the lowest floor level was taken for maisonettes
(ii) The difference in the distribution of ground/first floor levels between black and white applicants is significant at a five per cent level of confidence

3.22 Most property, 53 per cent, allocated to black and white applicants in our sample was between the second and fifth floors, with 26 per cent on lower floor levels and 21 per cent above the sixth floor. The main significant difference between black and white applicants occurred in allocations to ground and first-floor levels, where 34 per cent of white applicants were allocated compared with 19 per cent of black applicants.

3.23 As a result of examining each of the measures of quality of accommodation, we found that, overall, black waiting list applicants fared less well than their white counterparts. They were more likely to be allocated to flats, and less likely to receive houses. They were also less likely to find themselves in new property, and more likely to be allocated to the inter-war estates which, because of the poor quality of the improvement work carried out, had quickly become difficult-to-let. Finally, among those allocated to flats or maisonettes, black applicants were less likely than white ones to be living on the ground or first-floor levels. Having established that these quality differences existed, before reaching any view as to whether unlawful discrimination had occurred, we looked in detail at the variety of other factors which may have affected the allocations waiting list applicants received. One of the key variables which might have influenced patterns of allocation was family type, and this subject is dealt with below. A variety of other factors which might have influenced allocation decisions are discussed in Chapters 7 to 10.

The effect of family type of the quality of accommodation allocated

3.24 Family type is one of the key variables outside the local authority’s control which might influence allocation decisions, because the size and composition of households, that is, whether these are small or large, numbers of children, single people, married couples or lone pensioners determines the size of accommodation required in terms of the number of bedrooms, and may also affect the floor level allocated. For example, if a much larger proportion of one racial group was families with three or more children and all the accommodation with the appropriate number of bedrooms was in houses, or older Council housing stock, this racial group might, irrespective of race or colour, receive a larger proportion of houses or older property than the other racial group. Similarly, if pensioners formed a larger proportion of one racial group than another, they might also receive a larger proportion of ground or first-floor accommodation, because elderly people may need the ease of access to their property which low floor levels afford.

3.25 Since we had established that among our waiting list sample white applicants were significantly more likely than black ones to have received houses or maisonettes and new property and ground or first-floor accommodation, we examined whether there were any differences in the distribution of family types within the two racial groups which accounted for the differences we had found in relation to each of the three quality indicators.

3.26 The distribution of family types within our waiting list sample is shown in Table 3.7. The most common family type, representing almost one-third of our sample, was ‘other households/no children’. There was little difference between the relative proportions of blacks (34 per cent) and whites (30 per cent) in this family type, which also formed a larger proportion among the waiting list sample than was present in any of the other access channels we studied. This, in part, is likely to be explained by the allocation of some of these applicants to difficult-to-let properties in Hackney, for which families with children were not generally considered. Similarly, the presence of a relatively large number of single people in the waiting list sample (17 per cent), again with similar proportions among black and whites, may also partly have been as a result of these schemes. Pensioners formed only two per cent of the waiting list sample.

Table 3.7 The Distribution of Family Types, by Ethnic Origin (Waiting List)

	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pensioners: single and married couples	4	3	2	2	2	5
Single persons	17	15	18	17	17	32
Other households/ no children	34	30	30	29	32	59
Single parent with 1 or 2 children	19	17	4	4	12	21
Single parent with 3 + children	0	0	2	2	1	2
2 + adults with 1 or 2 children	15	13	36	34	26	47
2 + adults with 3 + children	11	10	8	8	10	18
	100	88	100	96	100	184

3.27 Among all families with children, the typical nuclear family of 2+ adults with 1 or 2 children represented 26 per cent of our sample: single parent families, 12 per cent, and large families, that is those with three or more children, 11 per cent. A similar proportion of both black and white applicants was in the large family type, and it was only in relation to the two family types with one or two children that proportional differences between black and white applicants occurred. A higher proportion of white applicants (36 per cent) than black (15 per cent) was in the 2+ adults with 1 or 2 children category, whereas a higher proportion of black applicants (19 per cent) than white (four per cent) was in the 'single parent with 1 or 2 children' one.

The effect of family type on the property type allocated

3.28 In all but two family types, the proportions of black and white applicants in our waiting list sample were very similar, and their distribution did not, therefore, explain why white applicants were more likely than black ones to receive houses or maisonettes. In the family types 'single parent with 1 or 2 children' and '2+ adults with 1 or 2 children', there were proportional differences between the two racial groups. However, we concluded that these differences still did not explain the distribution of houses, maisonettes and flats, because families in both groups would have been allocated two or three-bedroom accommodation, depending on their total size and composition, and accommodation of this size could have been in flats, maisonettes or houses.

3.29 Furthermore, as Table 3.8 shows, even where the family type was common, that is, for '2+ adults with 1 or 2 children', white applicants in our waiting list sample were still more likely than black ones to have been allocated houses or maisonettes.

Table 3.8 The Distribution of Property Types Among Family Type 2 + Adults with 1 or 2 children, By Ethnic Origin, (Waiting List)

<i>Property type</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No		No	%	No
Flats	77	10	47	16	55	26
Maisonettes/houses	23	3	53	18	45	21
	100	13	100	34	100	47

Note: The difference between black and white applicants in the distribution of flats and maisonettes/houses is significant at a 10 per cent level of confidence

Although in this case the difference between black and white applicants was significant only at a 10 per cent level of confidence, it still supported the results set out in paragraph 3.18. A complete breakdown of property types allocated to each family type within both racial groups is set out in Appendix C.

3.30 When Hackney were informed of our investigation's provisional findings, including the evidence relating to property types set out above, it suggested in their representations that the family type classification we had used did not take adequate account of whether waiting list applicants were allocated to two or three-bedroom accommodation. The Council said that this question was important, because most two-bedroom accommodation in the borough was in flats and most three-bedroom housing maisonettes or houses. If more black applicants required two-bedroom accommodation and more white applicants three-bedroom property, this would have affected the distribution of flats, maisonettes and houses between the two racial groups.

3.31 We therefore re-examined the distribution of property types within our waiting list sample in terms of those who were allocated two or three-bedroom accommodation by Hackney. We found that in the three-bedroom category, 42 per cent of white tenants were allocated houses, compared with 13 per cent of black tenants. In the two-bedroom category no-one received houses, but 17 per cent of white applicants received maisonettes, while only three per cent of black applicants received this property type. Of black applicants, 97 per cent were allocated to flats compared with 77 per cent of whites. Therefore, the difference between black and white applicants in our waiting list sample still emerged, even when the evidence was analysed in relation to the bedroom category to which they were allocated.

The effect of family type on the age of property allocated

3.32 The family type variable was only of limited relevance when considering possible explanations for differences which emerged in relation to the age of property allocated, because generally there was no reason why property of a particular age, flat, maisonette or house, was suited to any particular family type. The only exception to this was acquired property. In Hackney, acquired properties are predominantly houses, although some may have been converted into flats, and these were more likely to be allocated to large families.

3.33 We took account of this factor, but found that among the large families in our waiting list sample, very few allocations were made to acquired properties and that there was little difference between black and white applicants in relation to this age category. We therefore concluded that family types did not provide any explanation why white applicants were significantly more likely to be allocated to new property and black applicants to the inter-war estates.

The effect of family type on the floor level allocated

3.34 We concluded that the distribution of family types did not explain our finding that a higher proportion of white applicants had been allocated to ground or first-floor levels, because among the family types that we would have expected to be allocated to these levels, there were no differences between racial groups. For instance, we accepted that pensioners would be more likely to be allocated to lower floor levels, but there were minimal numbers of pensioners in our waiting list sample and no difference between blacks and whites in terms of the floor levels to which they were allocated.

3.35 Having examined the effect of family type on each of the three measures we had used to compare the quality of accommodation allocated to black and white applicants, therefore, we concluded that this factor did not provide an explanation for the less favourable treatment of black applicants which we had identified.

Note

1. Since April 1983, Hackney has removed the residential qualification, and now anyone resident in the borough is actively considered and their priority assessed under the points scheme.

4. THE HOMELESS

4.1 Following a pattern similar to the preceding chapter, we shall examine here the allocation procedures which Hackney followed in relation to the homeless, the comparative quality of accommodation allocated to blacks and whites in our homeless sample, and the effect of family types on these results. As with the waiting list, the procedures we describe here were those operating in 1978 and 1979 and since then, it should be noted, Hackney has initiated some changes.

4.2 The homeless, like the waiting list, are normally new entrants to the Council housing sector and, in housing need terms, are the most urgent category, because in many cases they either have no accommodation at all, or will shortly find themselves in this position. The majority of all the homeless cases in our sample were in priority need as defined by the Housing (Homeless) Persons Act 1977. As Table 1.2 shows, there were an equal number of black and white homeless applicants in our sample, 46 per cent in each case, five per cent being of Greek or Turkish origin and three per cent from 'other' racial groups. Relative to their proportion in Hackney's overall population, black applicants formed a large proportion of our homeless sample.

4.3 During 1978 and 1979, the GLC played a major role in rehousing Hackney's homeless, and we have therefore included a separate sample of GLC homeless nominations in our survey. We describe the relevant allocation procedures and give our survey results in Chapter 14.

4.4 Homeless families in Hackney were at one time the responsibility of the Social Services Department, but coordination problems between the social services and housing departments, together with a shortage of accommodation, had meant that at times as many as two hundred families were being temporarily housed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Following a review of the situation, in November 1975 a special housing department unit, the Housing Emergency Section (HES), was established, to arrange for the assessment of homeless families and general administration leading to their rehousing. Welfare officers to give support to families were also attached to the unit, which was located in the Housing Advice Centre in Hackney. When the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act came into force in 1977, the financial responsibility for the provision of temporary accommodation also moved to the HES.

Access for homeless families

4.5 The majority of homeless cases were referred to the HES through the Housing Advice Centre, although on occasions they received direct referrals from other agencies. Once a family had been referred to the HES its members were assessed to determine whether they were covered by the priority need categories defined in the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, and whether they were the responsibility of Hackney. This assessment included an investigation of the facts of the case, and verification, where necessary by personal visits or contact with other boroughs if the family appeared to have a possible local connection elsewhere. Hackney has had relatively few cases which they defined as 'intentionally' homeless and, thus, refused to house. Any cases considered to be in this category had to be referred to the chairman of the housing committee for his consideration, and ratification that the applicant was intentionally homeless. In 1983 an appeals procedure was introduced by those applicants who had been declared intentionally homeless.

4.6 Once a family had presented themselves as homeless and, *prima facie*, were in priority need under the 1977 Act, arrangements were made to place them in temporary accommodation if they were actually homeless. However, before such arrangements were made, the HES tried to determine whether the family were able to remain in their present, or other, accommodation on a temporary basis, for example, with relatives, in order to minimise the provision of temporary Council accommodation. Where an alternative to temporary accommodation was available, the family was rehoused directly from this accommodation into permanent accommodation. The high level of black representation in our sample of homeless cases (46 per cent) indicated to us that, as with the waiting list, initial access to Council housing had not been difficult for the black families in our sample, and there was no evidence of this group being treated less favourably in this respect.

Reasons for homelessness

4.7 In general, we found that the reasons for both black and white applicants becoming homeless were similar, although as Table 4.1 shows, black applicants were generally more likely than white ones to have become homeless as a result of a dispute with their families or friends, and white applicants were more likely that black to have become homeless as a result of receiving notice to quit from the GLC because

they were in rent arrears. Nothing, therefore, emerged from this data source which, in our view, showed that black homeless applicants deserved to be allocated poorer-quality accommodation than whites, particularly as black applicants were less likely to have been evicted for rent arrears than white applicants. Rent arrears may have been one ‘justification’ for Hackney allocating poorer-quality properties to certain applicants.

Table 4.1 Reasons for Homelessness, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Reasons for homelessness</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Dispute with family or friend	57	49	46	40	51	89
Illegal letting	6	5	2	2	4	7
Illegal eviction	0	0	2	2	1	2
Notice to quit: private landlord	19	16	14	12	16	28
Notice to quit: Hackney	1	1	0	0	1	1
Notice to Quit: GLC	3	3	15	13	9	16
Emergency	5	4	1	1	3	5
Other	9	8	20	17	15	25
	100	86	100	87	100	173

The provision of temporary accommodation

4.8 Hackney used a variety of sources to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families. Bed-and-breakfast hotels, mostly in the Finsbury Park area, were the main source of such accommodation, but the borough also had an arrangement with a local housing association to utilise some of their short-life properties for this purpose, and also used some hostel accommodation of its own. Occasionally, the Council also used the very temporary accommodation provided by such organisations as the Salvation Army and Women’s Aid Centres. Owing to the pressure of providing temporary accommodation at short notice the HES staff said that they often had little control over the type of temporary accommodation provided to families. However, as far as possible they tried to place particularly vulnerable families, (for example, a very young single-parent family) into their own hostel accommodation, where there was some warden support. Larger families were placed in housing association short-life property.

4.9 Our data showed that the majority of applicants (66 per cent) were given temporary accommodation and that black applicants were marginally more likely to have needed this temporary accommodation than white ones.

4.10 As Table 4.3 shows, the great majority of applicants provided with temporary accommodation were allocated to bed-and-breakfast accommodation (83 per cent), with 15 per cent being allocated to hostel accommodation, and two per cent to short-life housing. There were no significant differences between white and black applicants in terms of the type of temporary accommodation to which they were allocated.

Table 4.2 Need for Provision of Temporary Accommodation, by Ethnic Origin (Homeless)

<i>Whether temporary accommodation provided</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Temporary accommodation provided	71	59	60	50	66	109
No temporary accommodation provided	29	24	40	33	34	57
	100	83	100	83	100	166

Table 4.3 Type of Temporary Accommodation Provided, by Ethnic Origin (Homeless)

<i>Type of temporary accommodation</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Bed and breakfast	80	47	88	43	83	90
Hostel	17	10	12	6	15	16
Short-life housing	3	2	0	0	2	2
	100	59	100	49	100	108

Note: This table only includes homeless cases provided with temporary accommodation.

Length of time spent in temporary accommodation

4.11 The length of time families remained in temporary accommodation depended on the supply of properties available at particular times, either from the Council’s own stock or through the GLC. However, the HES said that since 1977 most families in temporary accommodation had had to wait at least two months for an offer of permanent rehousing, and some families waited for up to a year before an offer of accommodation was made.

4.12 We found that, among our sample, about a quarter of applicants was allocated permanent property within one month of being given temporary accommodation, and a further third within three months. Only seven per cent of the total had to wait longer than six months, and no applicants had to wait longer than a year. There were some differences in the respective lengths of time spent in temporary accommodation between white and black applicants, in that white applicants were marginally more likely than black ones to be rehoused within three months. However, as these differences were not statistically significant, we did not find that black applicants in our sample had been discriminated against in this respect.

Table 4.4 Length of Time Spent in Temporary Accommodation, by Ethnic Origin (Homeless)

<i>Length of time in temporary accommodation</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Less than 1 month	24	14	21	11	23	25
1-3 months	35	20	48	25	41	45
3-6 months	33	19	25	13	29	32
6-9 months	3	2	6	3	4	5
9-12 months	5	3	0	0	3	3
More than 1 year	0	0	0	0	0	0
	100	58	100	52	100	110

Note: This table only includes homeless cases provided with temporary accommodation

The allocation of permanent accommodation

4.13 Once a family had been allocated, and if necessary provided with, temporary accommodation, the HES completed its investigation of the case, and, when the facts were confirmed, wrote a brief résumé of the applicant’s housing and personal history, which, together with the case file, was passed to the allocations section so that permanent accommodation could be provided. The HES report to the allocation section usually dealt only with the basic facts of the case. Information about where the family preferred to live was not normally included at the time of our study, although, on occasion, an individual HES officer may have referred to the particular needs of a family, for example, which schools the children were attending, or the location of employment. Once the details of homeless cases had been passed to this section, the HES officers took no further part in the actual letting of property, although individual officers may have contacted it to notify it of any changes in family circumstances or, where a family had been in temporary accommodation for a considerable time, to try and facilitate an early offer of permanent housing.

The quality of accommodation allocated to homeless applicants

4.14 As previously explained, we used three measures to compare the quality of accommodation allocated to black and white applicants, and these remain the same for each rehousing category, including the homeless.

Property type

4.15 As Table 4.5 shows, most allocations to the homeless applicants in our sample were to flats (79 per cent) with 15 per cent of allocations to maisonettes and six per cent to houses.

Table 4.5 Type of Property Allocated to Homeless Applicants

Type of property	Homeless applicants	
	%	No
Flats	79	153
Maisonettes	15	29
Houses	6	12
	100	194

4.16 However, although overall there were few houses or maisonettes allocated to the homeless, we found that white applicants received a significantly greater proportion of these types of property (27 per cent) compared with black applicants (15 per cent) who, consequently, were more likely to have been allocated to flats.

Table 4.6 Type of Property Allocated to Homeless Applicants, by Ethnic Origin

Type of property	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Flats	85	75	73	65	79	140
Maisonettes	10	9	18	16	14	25
Houses	5	4	9	8	7	12
	100	88	100	89	100	177

Note: The difference in the allocation of flats compared with houses and maisonettes combined is significant at a five per cent level of confidence

Because there were equal numbers of black and white applicants in our sample, we would have expected an equal proportion of properties of each type to be allocated to each racial group but, in fact, we found that white applicants received 67 per cent of all houses, 64 per cent of all maisonettes and 46 per cent of all flats, whereas black applicants received 33 per cent of the houses, 36 per cent of the maisonettes and 54 per cent of the flats.

Age of property

4.17 Table 4.7 shows the distribution of property of different ages between black and white homeless applicants.

Table 4.7 Age of Property Allocated to Homeless Applicants, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Age of property</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pre-war	11	10	11	10	11	20
Post-war	50	43	57	49	53	92
Post-1970	13	11	11	10	12	21
New	2	2	1	1	2	2
Alexandra House	0	0	1	1	0.5	1
Inter-war	13	11	5	4	9	15
Acquired	11	10	14	12	12.5	22
	100	87	100	87	100	174

Note: The difference in the distribution of inter-war properties in relation to black and white applicants is significant at a 10 per cent level of confidence

More than half of the allocations made were to post-war accommodation, and only two per cent to new property. Most of the remainder were spread fairly evenly between acquired properties (12.5 per cent), pre-war accommodation (11 per cent) and the inter-war estates (nine per cent). We found little difference between the black and white applicants in our sample in relation to the different age codes, except for the inter-war category to which 13 per cent of the black sample was allocated compared with five per cent of the white sample, repeating the pattern we found in relation to our waiting list sample. However, this difference was only significant at a 10 per cent level of confidence, and, since there were no statistically significant differences in relation to any of the other age codes, we did not conclude that this evidence provided a basis for a finding of unlawful discrimination.

Floor levels

4.18 The floor levels of the flats and maisonettes to which the black and white applicants in our homeless sample were allocated are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Floor Level of Property Allocated to Homeless Applicants, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Floor level</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Ground and 1st floor	45	37	38	31	42	68
2nd-5th floors	47	39	62	50	54	89
6th-19th floors	8	7	0	0	4	7
	100	83	100	81	100	164

Note:(i) This table includes flats and maisonettes only; the lowest floor level was taken for maisonettes
(ii) The difference in the distribution of the 6th-19th floor levels between blacks and whites is significant at a one per cent level of confidence

More than half of the allocations were to accommodation between the 2nd-5th floor levels, followed by 42 per cent to the ground and first-floor levels. There were relatively few allocations to levels above the 6th floor. There were some differences in the floor levels of allocations to black and white applicants, with white applicants more likely to have been allocated between the 2nd-5th floor levels although this was only significant at a 10 per cent level of confidence, and consequently we attached no importance to it. The table also shows that black applicants were marginally more likely to have been allocated to the ground and first-floor levels, but this was not statistically significant, even at the 10 per cent level. The important result, in our view, was that among our sample the black applicants received all the allocations above the 6th-floor level and this difference was significant at a one per cent level of confidence, even though the numbers involved were very small. We examined each of the seven cases where black homeless applicants had been allocated accommodation on the 6th floor and above, and found that two of these families had a child under five years of age, which was contrary to Hackney's policy at that time of not housing families with young children above the 5th floor.

4.19 Having examined each of the measures of the quality of accommodation allocated to the homeless, we established that, like our waiting list sample, black applicants fared significantly less well than their white counterparts both in relation to the type of property and floor level allocated. We therefore went on to consider whether the family types present in our sample could account for either of these differences. The potential impact of family type on allocations has been explained in Chapter 3.

THE EFFECT OF FAMILY TYPE ON THE QUALITY OF ACCOMMODATION ALLOCATED

4.20 The distribution of family types for the black and white applicants in our homeless sample is shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 The Distribution of Family Types, by Ethnic Origin (Homeless)

Family type	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pensioners: single and married couples	1	1	3	3	2	4
single persons	15	13	13	12	14	25
Other households/no children	8	7	16	14	12	21
Single parent with 1 or 2 children	37	33	23	20	30	53
Single parent with 3 + children	2	2	4	4	4	6
2 + adults with 1 or 2 children	31	27	32	28	31	55
2 + adults with 3 + children	6	5	9	8	7	13
	100	88	100	89	100	177

Almost two-thirds of our total homeless sample was made up of the two family types with one or two children, with 31 per cent in the '2+ adults with 1 or 2 children' type, and 30 per cent in the 'single parent with 1 or 2 children' type. Although a large proportion, 27 per cent, of white homeless families was present in the single parent category, the proportion of black homeless applicants was even more substantial, 39 per cent, and represented the main black family type in this access channel. A larger proportion of white homeless applicants, 16 per cent, was in the 'other household/no children', category

compared with black applicants, where the proportion was eight per cent. Otherwise, the breakdown of family types between black and white in the remaining categories was very similar.

The effect of family type on the quality of accommodation allocated

4.21 The distribution of family types within the two racial groups did not, in our view, explain why white homeless applicants were more likely than their black counterparts to receive houses or maisonettes. Even where the family type was common, that is '2+ adults with 1 or 2 children', significant differences still emerged. The numbers of black and white homeless applicants in this particular family type were virtually the same, and were also sufficient for separate analysis. As Table 4.10 shows, among our sample, 32 per cent of the white homeless applicants in this family type received maisonettes or houses, compared with four per cent of black homeless applicants, whereas 96 per cent of black families received flats, compared with 68 per cent of white families. These differences were highly significant, at a one per cent level of confidence.

Table 4.10 Distribution of Property Types Among Family Type, '2+ Adults With 1 or 2 Children', by Ethnic Origin (Homeless)

<i>Property type</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Flats	96	26	68	19	82	45
Maisonettes and houses	4	1	32	9	18	10
	100	27	100	28	100	55

Note: The difference between black and homeless applicants in the distribution of flats and maisonettes/houses is significant at a one per cent level of confidence

4.22 Among the remaining family types, the proportions of blacks and whites who were pensioners, single people or large families, which might have influenced whether some people received flats, maisonettes or houses because these types of accommodation differed in size, were very similar and did not, therefore, explain the differences we found. Although there were variations between the proportions of black and white homeless applicants in the 'single parent' and 'other households' without children family types, we concluded that these did not explain why one of these groups received a greater proportion of a particular property type than others, since single parent families were as likely, or unlikely, to be allocated to flats, maisonettes or houses as other households without children. The complete distribution of property types between family types for each racial group is given in Appendix C.

The effect of family type on the floor level allocated

4.23 As we mentioned in relation to the waiting list sample, we accepted that pensioners were the family type most likely to have had some effect on the floor level allocated. However, as this group represented only two per cent of our homeless sample, it provided no explanation for the highly significant result identified in paragraph 4.18, which showed that among our homeless sample all allocations to the 6th floor and above went to black applicants, including two of a family type which Hackney itself had a policy of not allocating above the 5th floor level.

4.24 The relatively poorer quality of accommodation measured in terms of both property type and floor level allocated to black homeless applicants was not, therefore, in our view, attributable to any differences in the distribution of family types between the two racial groups.

Note

1. Since July 1983 the policy in relation to families with young children is that only those specifically prepared to live above the 3rd floor are being offered such properties.

5. DECANTS

5.1 As explained in Chapter 1, the term ‘decant’ is applied to a variety of circumstances where the local authority rehouses people because their existing accommodation in the public or private sector needs to be vacated. This will enable it to proceed with site development, or improvement and modernisation programmes. If the property, or part of it, is unfit for habitation, the necessary building work or repairs cannot be carried out at reasonable cost while the occupants continue to live there. Deadlines for such tenants moving out of their accommodation are often imperative, as building work has already been contracted or planned in detail, and this means that decants are in a relatively strong bargaining position when considering acceptance or rejection of offers of accommodation. In Hackney decants are given high priority both in terms of the quality and timing of offers of accommodation.

5.2 As Table 1.2 shows, black tenants formed a relatively large proportion, (41 per cent), of our sample of allocations to decants during 1978 and 1979, given that NDHS data showed their proportion in Hackney’s overall population to be 19.5 per cent. White tenants constituted 54.5 per cent of our sample of decant allocations, and people of Greek or Turkish origin four per cent.

5.3 The relatively high level of black representation in this access channel resulted to a very large extent from the Council’s improvement and modernisation programmes on their own estates. More than 80 per cent of the black decants in our sample were rehoused as a result of these programmes, compared with 56 per cent of white decants. In a report to Hackney’s housing management committee in November 1979, the Director of Housing suggested that the borough’s pre-war estate modernisation programme would make the most significant contribution to rehousing ethnic minority groups, particularly those who had originally been homeless, into good conditions. Displaced tenants would become decant cases, and would therefore have a good choice of alternative accommodation. As Table 5.1 shows, a very high proportion of our decant sample had originally been rehoused by the Council as homeless cases on the poor-quality pre-war estates which were subsequently modernised.

Table 5.1 Access Channel Prior to Decanting, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Original access channel</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Homeless	58	49	20	21	37	70
Waiting list	30	25	32	33	31	58
Transfer	2	2	11	11	7	13
Other (e.g., medical cases)	8	7	19	20	14	27
Not relevant (i.e., private sector)	2	2	18	18	11	20
	100	85	100	103	100	188

However, as our results will show, although the decanting process may in general have improved tenants’ housing conditions, black decants still did not fare as well as white ones in terms of the quality of accommodation they were allocated. Differences between the racial groups still persisted, albeit on higher rungs of the quality ladder.

Access into the decant channel

5.4 Unlike the waiting list, homeless and transfer channels, individuals do not usually apply for rehousing as decants, and the rehousing initiative rests with the local authority. Where individual properties are unfit for habitation or repair while occupied, the tenant may in effect initiate the process by registering a complaint or requesting a transfer but, in the case of major modernisation or clearance programmes, Council discussions, consultations with tenants, and home visits to tenants who will need to be decanted are part of the programme schedule.

5.5 As with each of the access channels included in our survey, we examined whether black decants were likely to have had to wait longer before being allocated accommodation than white decants, but found no significant differences between black and white tenants in this respect.

The quality of accommodation allocated to decants

Property type

5.6 In our decant sample, as Table 5.2 shows, a significantly larger proportion of black tenants was allocated to houses than white tenants who, in turn, received a significantly larger proportion of flats.

Table 5.2 Type of Property Allocated to Decants, by Ethnic Origin

Property type	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Flats	27	26	49	64	4	90
Masionettes	26	25	21	28	23	53
Houses	47	46	30	39	37	85
	100	97	100	131	100	228

Note: The differences in the allocation of both houses and flats between white and black tenants are significant at a one per cent level of confidence

Age of Property

5.7 Nearly half of all properties allocated to decants were new, 22 per cent being post-war and 20 per cent acquired properties. This large proportion of new accommodation reflected the high priority Hackney accorded to rehousing tenants in this access channel. For instance, decant allocation officers were able to take first choice of vacant properties available for letting, as well as the strong bargaining position of the tenants themselves, who would know that the Council was obliged to rehouse them, possibly by specific deadlines for modernisation programmes. However, as Table 5.3 shows, there were significant differences between black and white decants with regard to the allocation of new and acquired property, in that white decants received a higher proportion of the new property and black decants a higher proportion of the acquired property which, as explained in Chapter 1, is often older, unmodernised housing stock.

Table 5.3 Age of Property Allocated to Decants, by Ethnic Origin

Age of property	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pre-war	0	0	3	4	2	4
Post-war	23	21	22	28	22	49
Post-1970	12	11	8	10	9	21
New	35	33	54	69	46	102
Alexandra House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inter-war	0	0	1	1	1	1
Acquired	30	28	12	16	20	44
	100	93	100	128	100	221

Note: The differences in the allocation of new and acquired property between black and white tenants are significant at a one per cent level of confidence

Floor level

5.8 More than 70 per cent of all decants were allocated to ground or first floor levels and there were no significant differences between black and white decants with regard to this quality measure.

Table 5.4 Floor Level Allocated to Decants, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Floor level</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Ground and 1st floor	78	38	71	65	73	103
2nd-5th floors	18	9	27	24	24	33
6th-19th floors	4	2	2	2	3	4
	100	49	100	91	100	140

Note: This table includes flats and maisonettes only; the lowest floor level was taken for maisonettes

The effect of family type on the quality of accommodation

5.9 When we examined the distribution of family types for black and white tenants in our decant sample, as Table 5.5 shows, we found marked differences between the two racial groups. Nearly 60 per cent of black tenants were either single parent families or large families and only 21 per cent of white tenants were in these categories. The largest proportion of white tenants were in the ‘other households/ no children’ category (31 per cent) and the ‘2+ adults with 1 or 2 children’ (25 per cent) one, but only 34 per cent of black tenants were in these categories. Virtually all the pensioners in our sample were white (12 per cent); this was predictable given that the majority of black immigration into Britain occurred after the Second World War and involved younger people who are only now beginning to reach retirement age in significant numbers.

Table 5.5 Distribution of family types, by Ethnic Origin (Decants)

<i>Family type</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pensioners: single and married couples	1	1	12	15	7	16
Single persons	5	5	11	14	9	19
Other household/no children	13	13	31	38	23	51
Single parent with 1 or 2 children	28	27	8	10	17	37
Single parent with 3+ children	9	9	3	3	5	12
2+ adults with 1 or 2 children	21	20	25	31	23	51
2+ adults with 3+ children	23	22	10	12	16	34
	100	97	100	123	100	220

The effect of family type on the new type of property

5.10 We concluded that the distribution of family types between the racial groups in the decant sample provided an explanation for the higher proportion of black decants who were allocated houses and the higher proportion of white decants who received flats. Nearly 90 per cent of all the houses allocated to decants went to the four family types who had children, particularly to large families with three or more children. This was understandable, because most larger properties in Hackney of a suitable size for such families were houses rather than flats or maisonettes. However, 81 per cent of black decants and only 46 per cent of white decants were in these four family types, and the corollary of this family type distribution, irrespective of race or colour, was that a higher proportion of black decants were allocated houses. Among the family types for whom smaller accommodation was suitable, that is, pensioners and single persons, there was a higher proportion of white decants, and 23 per cent of these were in these two family types, compared with only six per cent of black decants. As the great majority of smaller accommodation in Hackney was in flats, it again followed that, because of family type distribution, a higher proportion of white decants were allocated to these. As with other access channels, full breakdown of family type by property type and ethnic origin is given in Appendix C.

The effect of family type on the age of property allocated

5.11 As Table 5.3 shows, white decants were significantly more likely to be allocated to new property and black decants to acquired property. Because we knew that many of the acquired properties in Hackney’s stock were houses, rather than flats and maisonettes, and because of their family type distribution, the black decants in our sample received more houses than white decants, we initially thought that the comparatively high proportion of acquired property allocated to black decants might have come about simply because they received a higher proportion of houses. If such a relationship could be established, our results showing that black decants were more likely to be allocated the less desirable acquired property could also be explained by the distribution of family types within the racial groups, a factor over which Hackney had no control.

5.12 In order to see whether this relationship existed, we examined the age of property allocated to black and white decants, separately, for houses, maisonettes and flats, and the results are set out in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6 Type and Age of Property Allocated to Decants, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Age of houses</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Acquired hous	40	18	33	13	37	31
Old house	11	5	11	4	11	9
New house	49	22	56	22	52	44
	100	45	100	39	100	84

<i>Age of maisonettes</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Acquired maisonette	8	2	0	0	4	2
Old maisonette	32	13	30	8	40	21
New maisonette	40	10	70	19	56	29
	100	25	100	27	100	52

Note: The difference between black and white decants in the allocation of new maisonettes is significant at a 10 per cent level of confidence

<i>Age of flats</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Acquired flats	32	8	5	3	13	11
Old flats	64	16	50	31	54	47
New flats	4	1	45	22	33	29
	100	25	100	62	100	87

Note: The differences between black and white decants in the allocation of old, new and acquired flats are significant at a one per cent level of confidence

From these results we were able to determine that the connection which we thought might have existed between the allocation of houses and of acquired property was not established, as both black and white

decants received broadly similar proportions of houses of different ages. The small differences between the black and white decants who were allocated houses were not significant even at a 10 per cent level of confidence.

5.13 Our results showed that the highly significant differences between the age of property allocated to black and white decants stemmed from the allocation of flats. Among the decants allocated to flats, 45 per cent of whites received new property, compared with only four per cent of blacks, virtually all of whom received old or acquired property. We could find no logical reason why the white decants who were allocated flats were more likely to receive new property than the black decants given flats. Unlike the position on houses that we have already outlined, family type did not explain why, with the flat property type, there were such significant differences in relation to the age of property allocated.

5.14 The significant differences which we identified in relation to the treatment of black and white decants concerned both the type and age of property allocated, with black decants receiving a larger proportion of houses than white decants, but white decants being allocated a larger proportion of new property, particularly flats, than black decants. Further examination of these results showed that while the distribution of family types within our sample, explained why black decants received proportionately more houses, it did not explain why white decants were allocated such a significantly higher proportion of new flats.

6. TRANSFERS

6.1 Our examination of Hackney's transfer procedures and practices covered the following areas:

(i) *The experience of successful transfer applicants* at various stages of the transfer process, from initial application to final allocation, to identify whether there were any differences in the way racial groups were treated or in the quality of accommodation they received. In common with each of the access channels we studied, a sample of allocations to transfer cases in 1978 and 1979 was included for this purpose in the survey. As Table 1.2 shows, 70 per cent of our transfer sample was white, 24 per cent black, three per cent Greek or Turkish and three per cent of 'other' ethnic origins. Although the proportion of black transfer cases in our sample was slightly higher than their proportion in Council housing in Hackney as shown by the 1977 NDHS data, it was well below that in each of the other access channels studied.

(ii) *The awareness of Council tenants generally of the possibility of obtaining a transfer and the steps they should take to do so*, in order to examine whether knowledge of the transfer system differed between racial groups, since this could have affected their success in achieving transfers. Most of the data under this heading were collected during interviews with tenants, conducted by Social and Community Planning Research (SCPR) on our behalf, with the homeless, waiting list and decant samples. We would stress that this interview data relied on tenants' recollections of events which had taken place some time previously and was, therefore, of a different nature from the information we obtained from tenants' files which had been recorded at the time events occurred.

(iii) *The experience of unsuccessful transfer applicants* to see whether there were any differences in the rates of rejection and reasons for those rejections between racial groups. As Hackney did not keep a central record of rejected transfer applications we could not simply take a sample of unsuccessful transfer applicants.

We therefore covered this area by recording, from information on the tenants' files for decants and transfers, whether they had made unsuccessful transfer applications in the past and why their applications had been rejected. We restricted this analysis to our decant and transfer samples because many of the tenants in the waiting list and homeless samples had only recently become council tenants and thus had not had time to apply for transfers.

The transfer policy and process

6.2 The transfer policy in operation in Hackney during 1978 and 1979 was introduced by the Council at the end of 1976. Under it, transfer applications were approved if they were made on one of the following grounds and tenants had lived at their current address for one year:

- (a) overcrowding, measured in terms of the room standards applied to the waiting-list;
- (b) under-occupation, that is, where tenants were living in larger accommodation than they needed;
- (c) medical grounds and social grounds; social grounds including moving a tenant to resolve a dispute between neighbours, or enabling an elderly person to live nearer relatives for the support they could give;
- (d) tenants with children under 10 years of age living above 5th floor levels; or
- (e) tenants who had lived on an estate for more than 10 years and had a clean rent record.

6.3 Although transfer requests would be approved if they fell into one of these categories, demands on the Council's available housing from other access channels meant there could be a considerable waiting period before alternative accommodation was offered. For example, in 1979 there were approximately 3,000 approved transfers waiting for housing, but only 415 transfer cases were rehoused in that year.

6.4 The length of time that tenants in our sample of successful transfers had waited between the date of their application and eventual allocation of accommodation was analysed. We found that just over half the group were rehoused within one year and more than three-quarters within two years. There were no significant differences between black and white tenants with regard to the length of time they waited. However, as these results related only to transfer cases which had been rehoused, we would emphasise that they may not have been representative of all the approved transfer cases still awaiting offers of accommodation.

Tenants' applications and the approval process

6.5 Tenants who wished to transfer would normally either have asked the resident estate superintendent in charge of their area or called at their nearest district office. In a few cases the tenant may have visited or written directly to the Housing Department. Although Hackney's policy was that transfer application forms, which included brief details of the existing accommodation, its occupants and the reason for transfer, should only have been given to tenants when it was likely that their request would be covered by one of the approved categories, in practice district office staff gave forms to any tenants who asked about transfers. The transfer section of the housing department was then responsible for deciding whether these requests fell into one of the approved categories and should, therefore, go forward for rehousing. In 1978 and early 1979 this section would normally have had only the application form and the tenant's file when considering whether to approve a transfer request. It would have been rare for a home visit to have been made before approval, unless it were a case of severe overcrowding. After April 1979 a home visit was always carried out before approval or rejection was given.

6.6 When deciding whether transfer requests qualified under the approved categories, the transfer section took the following points into account. The criteria used under the waiting-list points scheme were applied to determine whether an applicant had too much or too little accommodation. In assessing transfers requested on medical grounds, the section could, if they thought it necessary, ask the district community physician to confirm a GP's opinion. Tenants who were in arrears with their rent would not normally have had their transfer applications approved, irrespective of whether they were covered by the approved categories, unless a transfer enabled them to move to a lower rent property they could better afford. Transfer applications from tenants who were notorious for causing damage or having dirty living standards, factors which would have been known from their files, were approved for transfer if they fell into one of the approved categories, but their history would have been taken into account by the allocations officer when deciding what quality of accommodation to offer.

6.7 Tenants were notified in writing of the outcome of their transfer applications, and approved cases were then passed to the allocations section for offers of accommodation to be made. Hackney did not have any system for determining relative priorities between approved transfer cases, and priority for rehousing, both in terms of timing and quality, had to be decided by the relevant allocations officer. Throughout the transfer system, housing department officers were able to exercise a considerable degree of discretion, whether by encouraging or discouraging applicants, determining whether they approved categories applied, seeking further medical evidence, assessing the applicant during the home visit and deciding the priority for, and quality of, offers. Opportunities for the exercise of discretion also offer opportunities for discrimination to occur and we are pleased to note that Hackney will shortly be introducing a points scheme for the assessment of transfer applications. This will both order the priority to be given to the approved categories and provide for additional points to reflect the time tenants in different degrees of housing need have had to wait for a transfer. This scheme should ensure a less discretionary assessment of transfer applications in future.

Reasons why transfers were requested an approved

6.8 We identified from tenants' files the reasons why transfer applications were made and approved by the housing department. As Table 6.1 shows, 52 per cent of our black sample applied, and were approved, on grounds of overcrowding, whereas only one-third of the white sample was transferred for this reason. This result reflected the trend, shown by NDHS data, for black families in the Council sector in Hackney to be more likely than white ones to be living below the bedroom standard, that is, in accommodation with fewer bedrooms than the size of family required. NDHS data showed that six per cent of white families in the Council sector were below bedroom standard, whereas 15 per cent of black families were in this position. We found that a similar proportion of both racial groups were transferred on medical grounds, but that white tenants were more likely to have been transferred because they were under-occupying accommodation. In our view, this latter difference was predictable, in that there was greater white representation among the 'pensioners' and 'other household/no children' family types, where children might have left home, leaving accommodation under-utilised. Our results again reflect NDHS results showing that a higher proportion of white tenants in the Council sector were accommodated above the bedroom standard, 36 per cent of white tenants as compared with 15 per cent of black.

Table 6.1 Reasons Transfer Requests Made and Approved, by Ethnic Origin

Reason for transfer	Black		White		Total	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Overcrowding	52	25	33	46	38	71
Under-occupation	2	1	14	19	11	20
Health	21	10	21	29	21	39
Family connections	0	0	3	5	3	5
Social reasons	13	6	7	10	8	16
Environmental	6	3	11	15	9	18
Other	6	3	8	10	7	13
Not recorded	0	0	3	5	3	5
	100	48	100	139	100	187

Note: The differences between black and white tenants in relation to overcrowding and under-occupation are significant at a five per cent level of confidence

6.9 When considering the effect of Hackney’s transfer criteria, we bore in mind that conditions or requirements applied equally to all racial groups, can, in certain circumstances lead to indirect discrimination under the 1976 Act which, if not justifiable on non-racial grounds, would be unlawful. One of the grounds on which a transfer may be approved is where tenants have lived on one estate for more than 10 years. Since we were aware that residence requirements may be more difficult for ethnic minorities to comply with, when compared with whites, we took this factor into account in our analysis. However, from the file data we extracted as to the reasons for transfers being requested and approved, this criterion was not recorded on any of the tenants’ files as the reason for transfer. It would not, therefore, appear to be a significant factor adversely affecting ethnic minorities. However, certain of our results indicated that ethnic minorities resident in Hackney would find it more difficult to comply with this condition or requirement. Of our sample, 44 per cent of the white tenants on the Stonebridge estate had lived there for more than 10 years, compared with 10 per cent of black tenants (see Chapter 12). In addition, in each of our access channel samples, ethnic minorities were less likely than whites to have lived in Hackney for 10 years or more and so were less likely to have lived on any particular Council estate for this period.

6.10 Although we did not identify any transfers carried out under this particular criterion, our results show that, unless justifiable on non-racial grounds, it could amount to an indirectly discriminatory practice under Section 28 of the 1976 Act. ¹ It might be argued that it is justifiable in that anyone who has lived on a poor-quality estate for 10 years deserves a transfer to better-quality accommodation irrespective of their racial origin, and also that as their periods of residence increase, more ethnic minority Council tenants will be able to take advantage of this avenue for transfer. However, we know that in future Hackney will be operating a points scheme for assessing and ordering the priority of transfer applications, and we would recommend that the Council reconsider the relevance of this particular criterion in that context. If its objective is to provide an opportunity for tenants to move from poor-quality accommodation after a certain period of time, then the points awarded should be related to the quality of particular estates, and the qualifying period of residence on estates reduced to a level with which similar proportions of both ethnic minority and white tenants can comply.

Quality of accommodation allocated to transfers

6.11 The results of our analysis of the quality of accommodation allocated to transfers, unlike the three other access channels we have looked at, produced no statistically significant differences between blacks and whites.

Property type

6.12 Among our transfer sample there was a large number of allocations to houses and maisonettes, and a third of all houses allocated to tenants in our samples combined went to the transfer access channel.

Overall, black transfers received proportionately more houses and maisonettes than white transfers who, consequently, were more likely to be allocated flats, but the differences were not statistically significant, even at a 10 per cent level of confidence.

Table 6.2 Type of Property Allocated to Transfers, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Property type</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Flats	31	15	46	64	42	79
Maisonettes	31	15	24	33	26	48
Houses	38	18	30	42	32	60
	100	48	100	139	100	187

The effect of family type on the type of property allocated

6.13 We concluded that variations in the distribution of family types between black and white transfers largely explained why black tenants were marginally more likely to receive houses or maisonettes than white tenants. All pensioners and single persons were allocated to flats, and as Table 6.3 shows, only eight per cent of black tenants were of these family types, compared with 24 per cent of white tenants. All the large family types in this access channel were allocated houses, except for one large black family which was allocated a flat, and there were proportionately more large black families (27 per cent) than large white families (17 per cent). There were proportionately more white families in the ‘other households/no children’ family type, and proportionately more black families in the small single parent family type, with broadly similar proportions in the ‘2+ adults with 1 or 2 children’ category. However, there were no significant differences between black and white tenants in any of these categories with regard to the distribution of property types. The complete breakdown of family types in terms of the type of property allocated by ethnic origin is set out in Appendix C.

Table 6.3 Distribution of Family Types, by Ethnic Origin (Transfers)

<i>Family type</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Pensioners: single and married couples	2	1	13	18	10	19
Single persons	6	3	11	16	10	19
Other households/no children	15	7	26	36	23	43
Single parent with 1 or 2 children	17	8	3	4	6	12
Single parent with 3 + children	2	1	4	5	3	6
2+ adults with 1 or 2 children	33	16	29	41	31	57
2+ adults with 3+ children	25	12	14	19	17	31
	100	48	100	139	100	187

Age of property

6.14 The largest proportion of allocations to transfers were to new and post-war properties. Although there were proportional differences between black and white transfers allocated to property of these ages, with black tenants more likely to be allocated new properties, and white tenants more likely to be allocated post-war ones, neither of these differences was statistically significant, even at a 10 per cent level of confidence.

Table 6.4 Age of Property Allocated to Transfers, by Ethnic Origin

Age of property	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No.
Pre-war	4	2	1	2	2	4
Post-war	19	9	36	49	31	58
Post-1970	11	5	14	19	13	24
New	58	28	47	64	50	92
Alexandra House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inter-war	6	3	1	1	2	4
Acquired	2	1	1	2	2	3
	100	48	100	137	100	185

Floor level

6.15 The remaining quality indicator we examined was floor level and, as Table 6.5 shows, we found no significant differences between black and white tenants in terms of the floor levels to which they were allocated.

Table 6.5 Floor Level of Property Allocated to Transfers, by Ethnic Origin

Floor level	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Ground and first floors	63	19	61	53	62	72
2nd-5th floors	37	11	34	30	35	41
6th-9th floors	0	0	5	4	3	4
	100	30	100	87	100	117

Note: This table includes flats and maisonettes only; the lowest floor level was taken for maisonettes

Tenants knowledge of the transfer system in Hackney

6.16 Until the Housing Act 1980 required local authorities to make their allocation policies public, Hackney did not have a written explanation of the transfer process available to tenants. Therefore, the extent to which tenants in different racial groups knew about the possibility of obtaining a transfer, and the procedure to follow, was potentially an important factor in determining whether ethnic minority tenants were able to use one of the main avenues by which existing Council tenants can effectively improve their housing conditions. All the tenants in our waiting list, homeless and decant samples were

asked whether they knew about the possibility of requesting a transfer and, if so, what they should do, and the reasons they thought were needed. We found generally that black tenants were as well-informed about the transfer system as white ones.

6.17 About three-quarters of the tenants in our sample knew about the possibility of transfer, and nearly 90 per cent of these were able to name one of the correct contact points for making applications. Approximately two-thirds knew that a special reason was needed, and around half of both black and white tenants mentioned one of Hackney's approved criteria, particularly overcrowding. This result reflects the prominence of this factor among the reasons our successful transfer cases had been approved. Among the other reasons frequently mentioned there were differences between black and white tenants. For example, among the waiting list and decant samples, black tenants were more likely than white ones to mention the poor condition of their existing accommodation. For the waiting list sample in particular, we felt that this result reflected our findings that black waiting list applicants received poorer-quality accommodation than whites measured in terms of property type, age of property, and floor level allocation. (See Chapter 3).

6.18 We also asked the tenants in our waiting list, homeless and decant samples whether they had actually applied for a transfer, and what response they recalled receiving to their applications in order to examine whether any racial group experienced greater difficulty than another in obtaining approval for a transfer. We treated these results with some caution, both because of the small numbers in the group and the reliance placed on tenants' memories. However, when these responses were aggregated into 'positive' and 'negative', ² as shown in Table 6.6, black tenants overall were more likely than white ones to recall receiving negative responses from the housing department.

Table 6.6 Waiting List, Homeless and Decant Samples Applying for a Transfer: Recollection of Response Received, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Response recalled</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Positive	12	5	37	22	27	27
Negative	88	36	63	37	73	73
	100	41	100	59	100	100

Note: The differences between black and white responses are significant at a one per cent level of confidence.

Unsuccessful transfer applications

6.19 The remaining information we obtained on transfers complemented some of that obtained through tenant interviews, but was extracted from the potentially more reliable base of written records on tenants' files. As explained in paragraph 6.1 (iii), this information was concerned with determining whether tenants in the decant and transfer samples had previously made unsuccessful transfer applications and, if so, the reasons for the rejection of their applications. The information of tenants' files indicated that the same proportion of black and white tenants in the transfer sample had previously made unsuccessful applications. Among the decant sample, 30 per cent of black tenants had done so, compared with 24 per cent of white tenants, but this difference was not statistically significant. The main reasons why previous transfer applications had been rejected for tenants in both the transfer and decant samples were, in order of frequency:

- (i) reason for application not covered by approved categories;
- (ii) tenant in rent arrears;
- (iii) insufficient medical grounds; and
- (iv) tenants not in residence for one year.

With regard to the first two categories, there were relatively large percentage differences between black and white tenants, although due to the small numbers in each grouping, the results were not statistically significant even at a 10 per cent level of confidence.

6.20 We did not find, therefore, any significant differences between black and white tenants in our transfer sample, either in relation to the processing of applications or the quality of accommodation allocated. However, we have noted that at 24 per cent, the level of black representation in our sample was considerably lower than in the other three access channels we studied, where more than 40 per cent of our samples was black. Although the level of black representation was broadly in line with simple comparisons with NDHS data, showing that 18 per cent of Council tenants in Hackney were black, some of our other results would suggest that black tenants may have been under-represented in this access channel in terms of their housing need.

6.21 We found that a much larger proportion of black tenants were transferred as a result of overcrowding when compared with white tenants and, as NDHS data showed, black Council tenants were generally more likely than white ones to be living below the bedroom standard. In addition, our results showing black homeless, waiting list applicants and decants receiving poor-quality accommodation and being over-represented on the 'undesirable' Stonebridge and Holly Street estates suggested to us that the proportion of black tenants in the transfer category should possibly have been greater than it was.

6.22 Since our results showed that black and white tenants were equally aware of the transfer system, lack of knowledge among the black community did not appear to present a bar to their applying for transfer. However, we did find that a larger proportion of those who had applied recalled receiving a 'negative' response from the housing department. In the light of these results, we would recommend to the Council that when their ethnic record keeping and monitoring procedure is in operation within the housing department, they pay particular attention to transfer application and refusal rates and the effect of their new transfer points scheme on different racial groups.

NOTES

1. Section 28 states that 'discriminatory practice' means 'the application of a requirement or condition which results in an act of discrimination which is unlawful by virtue of any provision of Part II or III taken with Section 1(1) (b), or which would be likely to result in such an act of discrimination if the person to whom it is applied included persons of any particular racial group as regards which there has been no occasion for applying it.'

2. 'Positive' includes being put on the transfer list, or receiving and refusing one offer, or receiving and refusing more than one offer. 'Negative' includes 'heard nothing/nothing happened' or 'suggested apply for mutual exchange' or 'told to pay off arrears' or 'told insufficient ground for transfers'.

PART III

7. THE ALLOCATION PROCESS

8. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION: 'FORMAL' DATA

9. ASSESSMENT OF APPLICANTS BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT

10. AREA PREFERENCES, OFFERS AND REFUSALS

**11. DETERMINATION OF ETHNIC ORIGIN FROM REVIEW
OF TENANTS' FILES**

7. THE ALLOCATION PROCESS

7.1 Part II of this report outlined the results of the type and quality of property allocated to black and white applicants. As we have shown, the differences between black and white applicants occurred *within* access channels, *not* as a result of any broad structural factors, such as length of residence requirements, or differences in level of priority given to different rehousing categories, as has been found in some other studies. In Hackney, blacks were found to have been well represented in *all* the access channels, and consequently were not in effect disadvantaged, by being, for example, over-represented in the homeless channel which generally received poorer-quality accommodation.

7.2 In this part of the report we are, therefore, concerned with reviewing some of the factors that may have had a bearing on the process by which decisions were made about the allocation of properties, and the patterns that consequently emerged in each of the access channels. These factors range from the formal system and the measurement of what can be termed the more 'factual' data, such as whether there were rent arrears or references to specific medical requirements, to less formal indicators involving an assessment by housing officers, using their own judgement or experience. Included in this latter category are factors such as household standards assessments, and recommendations as to suitability for a particular property type.

7.3 Analysing these factors serves two purposes. Firstly, in terms of their direct influence on particular allocations, and whether in part they may 'explain' or 'justify' (at least from Hackney's point of view), particular patterns of allocation. For instance, if there were a strong relationship between rent arrears and the allocation of 'less desirable' accommodation to a particular group, Hackney might argue that applicants who had arrears, or a history of arrears, required low-priced property which inevitably was of relatively poor-quality. Secondly, this data can also be used to help locate at which stages of the rehousing process differential allocations might have arisen. For example, the way house-keeping standards were recorded, a measure involving officer judgement, may help locate the point at which differential allocation decisions were made, as well as providing some insight into the working of the informal, discretionary aspects of the allocation process during the period of our study. From our point of view, this was important, because research has shown that it is in areas where discretion plays a major part in decision making that discrimination or disadvantage is more likely to occur.

7.4 Chapter 8 covers the variables based on informal 'factual' criteria that may have explained particular patterns of allocation. These include data on rent arrears and medical needs. Chapter 9 deals with 'informal' criteria, which may help to determine precisely which factors may have influenced differential allocations. These include 'standards of housekeeping' and recommendations for suitability of property types. Chapter 10 reviews the influence of area preferences as recorded on tenants' files and the role of offers and refusals in the allocation process. It also includes some results of the tenant interview survey, dealing with individuals' perceptions of this aspect of the allocation system. The information dealt with in these chapters also refers, where appropriate, to the relevant policies and procedures which relate to the individual access channels. Finally, Chapter 11 reviews the data collected from tenants' files on the ethnicity of applicants and tenants. As will be seen, we correctly identified a high proportion of the ethnic origin of our sample simply by reference to the files. At the point when this data was collected, the actual ethnicity of the sample had not been ascertained and this was done later in the tenant interview survey.

7.5 All of the factors referred to in this section of the report, with the exception of offer/refusal data, were based on information collected by housing officers on applicants and tenants as part of their 'assessment', and recorded on appropriate report forms or on attached notes or memos kept on tenants' files. These files with their reports formed the basis on which the officers in the allocation section made their decisions on which properties to offer to individual applicants and tenants. More detailed background to the various factors we examined will be given in the following chapters. However, the role of the housing officer in visiting applicants differed in some ways between access channels, as did the priority which the allocation section accorded to these different channels. Therefore, we give a brief outline below of the 'visiting and assessment' system and the allocation section in relation to each access channel.

The visiting and assessment of applicants

7.6 *Waiting List* applicants were visited by officers from the *visiting section*. The decision as to who was visited was generally based on the points levels of applicants; those having the highest points level in each bedroom category being visited first. Decisions on the priorities for visits were, however, also partly dependent on the amount and type of property that was available. For instance, if there were plenty of

three-bedroom accommodation available, and relatively little two-bedroom property, then the former category applicants, might for a particular time have been given precedence for visits.

7.7 Decants: During 1978 and 1979, the officers who carried out home visits prior to rehousing in decant cases varied, depending on the type of decant case in question. Council tenants, that is, tenants who were being decanted because of a Council modernisation/improvement programme, or those needing a compulsory transfer, were visited by district office staff, including resident estate superintendents (responsible for supervising a group of estates). Non-local borough applicants, that is, those tenants who were slum clearance, and some redevelopment cases who were not already in Council property, were visited by officers from the allocations section responsible for making offers to decants. Since 1980, these latter 'non-LBH' cases have also been visited by officers from the visiting section.

7.8 Transfers: Home visits to transfer cases were normally done by the resident estate superintendent responsible for the estate from where the application was made, or, if he were not available, by the estate manager in the district office to which he reported.

7.9 Homeless: In terms of the visiting and assessment carried out in relation to the 'other cases' channels, the homeless were treated very differently. They were not visited and 'assessed' as in the other channels (by definition they could not generally be visited at home), but were investigated, to determine whether they fell within the remit of the 1977 Homeless Persons Act. A brief résumé of the applicant's housing and personal history was then written by the housing emergency section officer dealing with the case, and passed to the allocation section. Homeless applicants do not therefore feature in some of the analyses in the following chapters, not for example, being graded for housekeeping standards, and references to this is made in the appropriate parts of the chapters.

The role of visitors

7.10 In Hackney, housing officers visiting applicants in the decant, waiting list and transfer channels fulfilled the following functions:

Verification

7.11 The role of officers was to verify the accuracy of Council records on tenants and applicants, as well as the information contained in any application form. The visiting officers also filled in their own report form. There were some differences between the forms for each of the individual access channels. The main differences that occurred were in the case of the waiting list, the form contained details of size, facilities etc., of existing accommodation so that applicants could be 'pointed', and also details of their residence over the last five years. For the transfer channel, the form contained details of the reason for the application. For decants, references were made to the reason for decanting the tenants. Otherwise the type of data collected was common, although the way the questions were phrased in the report forms differed in some details.

Assessment

7.12 The visiting officer made an assessment of an applicant's suitability for different types of accommodation, for example, new, pre-war, post-war, conversion, as well as the housekeeping standards of the family, and rent record. These types of assessment were recorded in specific parts of the report form.

Provision of advice and recording applicants' preferences

7.13 The visiting officer's role was also to discuss with the applicant the prospects and possibilities of rehousing in general, so that the allocations section could be given an indication of the applicant's needs. This included preference areas, medical requirements and other information about factors that were important to the applicant or tenants, for instance, floor level requirements, and proximity to work and schools. The visiting officer might also discuss the possibility of being nominated to the GLC, housing associations or particular mobility schemes.

The allocation section

7.14 The allocation of properties by this section was, until October 1981, based on officers being responsible for particular access channels. Details of vacant properties were produced each week and then divided between the allocating officers. The cards containing details of vacant properties went to the officers responsible for allocations to decant cases and they, therefore, had the first choice of available properties. They generally took out those they considered to be the 'best' properties including those on the better-quality estates, and ground or first-floor property. The remaining vacancy cards were then passed to the officer responsible for transfer, social and medical, and waiting list cases. In terms of priority of allocation, medical and social cases came first, and then transfers, before waiting list applicants, although these were not necessarily hard and fast rules. The officers responsible for homeless allocations did not have vacancy cards of their own, but would take properties from the boxes of the other allocating officers, particularly the officer responsible for waiting list cases, as and when they were needed. In practice, this meant that the homeless officer was often taking vacant properties which were least wanted by other allocating officers, thus reflecting, during the period of our survey, the low priority accorded to this channel in terms of the quality of property allocated.

7.15 All the allocation officers assessed the quality of properties from the information kept on the vacant property cards which contained such details as the age of the property, its rent group, and the number of times it had previously been refused, as well as using their own knowledge and experience of the quality of various estates in Hackney. The actual machinery of sorting through the cards and 'matching' properties to individual applicants was fairly similar between the access channels, in that consideration of a factor such as the rent record of an applicant was common. The way the system operated in relation to each access channel, in brief, was as follows.

7.16 *Transfers:* Transfer cases awaiting allocation were kept in surname order in each bedroom category. Initially, the allocation officer went through all the cards in the relevant bedroom group when a particular property became available, although after a time he could often rely on his memory of transfer applications to achieve matches of properties with particular applicants. If he found that more than one family could be suitable for a particular property, he would at that stage take account of comments on housekeeping standards, and recommendations as to the suitability of the family for new or older types of property. In many cases, as for all the other access channels other than the homeless, the first offer was something of a 'gamble' to find out what the tenant might or might not accept. If an offer was refused, further offers could be made in the light of information gained from reasons the tenant gave for refusing an earlier one.

7.17 *Waiting List:* In relation to the waiting list, high-pointed applicants were 'matched' to particular vacant properties in the appropriate bedroom categories. At this stage, the process of 'matching' was generally very similar to that of transfers in terms of the officer taking into account the information contained on the application form.

7.18 *Decants:* The system in relation to the appraisal of the report and assessment forms, and the matching of applicants to properties, was similar to the two access channels referred to above. However, the reasons for which cases were rehoused first were based on the deadlines on closing orders, or planned programmes for site redevelopment and modernisation.

7.19 *Homeless:* The homeless allocating officer did not have his own 'supply' of vacant property cards, and so checked through the property cards held by other allocating officers and then 'negotiated' their use for homeless families when he found a suitable property. When assessing a property offer, the officer used the applicant's file as a means of obtaining basic information in order to determine which cases might be suitable for particular properties. As mentioned, homeless applicants in the period of the survey were not generally consulted about their preference areas, nor were such measures as housekeeping standards recorded on their files.

8. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION: ‘FORMAL’ DATA

8.1 This chapter deals with information collected during the course of our investigation on rent arrears and medical requirements. Apart from the key variable of family type referred to in earlier chapters, these factors might have played an important part in providing some explanation for the different patterns of allocation that we found between black and white applicants. Both of these data sources were concerned with the formal system of information gathering by the housing department, although we found that, at least in relation to medical needs, the system in practice appears to have been fairly informal, and left largely to the discretion of individual officers.

8.2 In examining the possible influence of these factors on allocations, we took into account that medical conditions might have been part of an explanation for some applicants being disproportionately allocated to lower floor levels. Also, we were aware that, from the local authority’s point of view, poor rent payment histories might have justified an allocation to poorer-quality accommodation. It is also worth mentioning here that we considered taking account of the related issues of economic circumstances and social class of applicants and tenants as a possible explanatory factor in patterns of allocation. Although we originally planned to collect this information, we discovered firstly, that Hackney did not consistently keep such data on applicants and tenants, and then that where they did it was often out of date. Secondly, even in those cases where such information was on file records, the allocating officers said that they took no notice of it, and this continues to be the case. Thirdly, the rent differences between properties in Hackney, particularly within the types of property offered in each access channel, were not great, and consequently the economic circumstances of applicants and tenants were not especially relevant. Therefore, in practical terms, data on economic status and social class were not of particular use to our study. Furthermore, it can also be argued that even if this data had been readily available and had played a part in the allocation process, such factors could never justifiably ‘explain’ a differential pattern of allocation which showed blacks generally receiving poorer-quality accommodation than whites.

Applicant’s rent history

8.3 References to rent records were kept on tenants’ files for the waiting list, transfer and decant channels, and the following section covers our analysis of data on rent arrears for only these three access channels. Specific information on previous rent records was not recorded on homeless applicants’ files. We were, however, able to obtain information on this from the section of the housing emergency section’s report which recorded reasons for homelessness as one of the categories among reasons for eviction as being rent arrears. Our homeless results (given in Table 4.1) in fact showed that fewer black applicants became homeless because of rent arrears than white ones, and therefore, the differences that occurred in the allocation pattern between black and white homeless applicants could not be ‘explained’ by this factor.

8.4 We found that Hackney, like many local authorities, placed considerable emphasis on a good rent record when considering housing applications, particularly in relation to waiting list and transfer cases. Waiting list applicants who had a high level of rent arrears in their previous accommodation would generally not have been offered housing by Hackney, although these cases may subsequently have become homeless because of eviction for rent arrears and have been rehoused through the homeless channel. Transfer applicants who were in rent arrears or who had a bad history of rent arrears would not normally have had their transfer applications approved by the Housing Department unless it would have enabled them to move to a lower-rented property which they could have more easily afforded.

8.5 Decant applicants whom the local authority had a duty to rehouse, were generally in the strongest ‘bargaining’ position, and would not necessarily have been offered a lower-quality property even when they had a history of rent arrears. In particular, if their debt were being paid off, these applicants were often given the same quality of offer as other decant cases. This could even include offers of new property if the deadline for ‘decanting’ the property was very close.

Table 8.1 Rent Arrears in Relation to Racial Groups (Transfers)

Rent record	Black		White		Total	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Regular	81	34	81	106	81	140
Irregular	19	8	19	25	19	33
	100	42	100	131	100	173

Table 8.2 Rent Arrears in Relation to Racial Groups (Waiting List)

Rent record	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Regular	100	66	98.5	69	99	135
Irregular	0	0	1.5	1	1	1
	100	66	100	70	100	136

Table 8.3 Rent Arrears in Relation to Racial Groups (Decants)

Rent record	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Regular	47	44	71	84	60	128
Irregular	53	49	29	35	40	84
	100	93	100	119	100	212

Note: The difference between black and white tenants in relation to rent record is significant at a one per cent level

8.6 Tables 8.1 and 8.2 show that in the waiting list and transfer access channels, a high proportion of all applicants had good rent records, as we would have expected from Hackney’s policy on rent arrears. The 19 per cent of transfer applicants who had irregular rent records were likely to comprise serious medical cases, statutory over crowding cases where a transfer was essential, or instances of under-occupation of a property where a transfer might have reduced the amount of rent payable.

8.7 In both access channels there was no difference in the pattern of rent arrears between black and white applicants, and so, in relation to the waiting list, this was not a factor which in our view ‘explained’ the differences we had found between blacks and whites in relation to the comparative quality of allocated accommodation in this channel.

8.8 The difference, however, in rent records between blacks and whites in the decant access channel (Table 8.3) was marked, with 53 per cent of black applicants having an irregular rent record, compared with 29 per cent of white ones. It was, therefore, possible that this pattern might have ‘explained’ the differences we found in the quality of property allocated, as related to age, to black and white tenants in this channel. However, as mentioned above, Hackney did not necessarily take account of rent arrears when making offers to decants.

8.9 We nevertheless examined decant rent arrears data in greater detail to determine whether there was a relationship between it and the age of property allocated. We separated out all tenants with *regular* rent records and reviewed the distribution of the two racial groups in relation to the age of property they

received. Tenants with *irregular* rent records were similarly reviewed, Our aim in doing this was to see if differences in the quality of allocated accommodation continued to appear between black and white tenants even where rent records were similar. If we found this to be the case, then the presence of rent arrears was obviously not a factor which explained why white tenants were more likely than black ones to have received new properties.

Table 8.4 The Pattern of Tenants With Regular Rent Records in Relation to the Age of Property Allocated to Them (Decants)

<i>Age of property</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pre-war	0	0	2	2	2	2
Post-war	25	11	20	16	21	27
Post-1970	9	4	9	7	9	11
New	41	18	63	52	55	70
Alexandra House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inter-war	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acquired	25	11	6	5	13	16
	100	44	100	82	100	126

Note: (i) The difference between black and white tenants in relation to new properties is significant at a five per cent level
(ii) The difference between black and white tenants in relation to acquired property is significant at a one per cent level

Table 8.5 The Pattern of Tenants With Irregular Rent Records in Relation to the Age of Property Allocated to Them (Decants)

<i>Age of property</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pre-war	0	0	3	11	1	1
Post-war	22	10	26.5	9	24	19
Post-1970	15	7	9	3	12.5	10
New	28	13	26.5	9	27.5	22
Alexandra House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inter-war	0	0	3	1	0	0
Acquired	35	16	32	11	34	27
	100	46	100	34	100	80

8.10 Tables 8.4 and 8.5 show that tenants with regular rent records tended to have received a greater proportion of new properties compared with tenants with irregular records, who in turn tended to have received a greater proportion of the less desirable ‘acquired’ properties. Hence, there appeared to be some general relationship between tenants’ rent records and the quality of property allocated.

8.11 However, while Table 8.5 shows that all tenants with irregular rent records received similar proportions of the different *types* of property, there remained a marked difference in the *ages* of property allocated to black and white tenants with regular rent records. Table 8.4 shows that among tenants with regular rent records, white tenants received a greater proportion of new properties (63 per cent) compared with black tenants (41 per cent). It also shows that black tenants received a greater proportion of ‘acquired’ properties (25 per cent) compared with white ones (six per cent).

8.12 We concluded, therefore, that while there was some relationship between rent arrears and the age of property allocated to decants, the existence of rent arrears did not explain the different pattern of allocations that we found between black and white decants. In particular, where both black and white

tenants had regular rent records, the difference in the age of property allocated continued to appear, especially in regard to white tenants, who received a greater proportion of the most desirable new properties.

Medical needs and requirements

8.13 Hackney operates a special access channel for urgent medical and social cases, to which we referred briefly in Chapter 2. We noted there that these cases were not covered by our study of allocations. However, in the four access channels included in our study, there were two *formal* procedures by which evidence relating to medical needs was taken into account in the allocation of property. Firstly, in the transfer channel, medical factors backed up by appropriate evidence, were sufficient to gain approval for transfer requests. Secondly, refusal of a housing offer by a homeless family would generally be allowed only on medical grounds, again supported by relevant evidence. Otherwise, the way in which visitors noted down medical requirements, and the possible importance attached to medical factors by allocation officers when reviewing file notes provided by visitors, were based largely on their own discretion. There were no formal guidelines as to how medical requirements should be assessed or recorded or how much account should be taken of them by allocating officers.

8.14 Basic data on file references to medical needs was collected during the study, with results shown in Tables 8.6 to 8.8. However, we would stress that the data should be treated with some caution. Firstly, since because of the agreement between the Commission and Hackney Council, details of medical conditions could have been removed from the files. Consequently, all that could be recorded was whether or not there had been a specific reference on the file to medical needs, and we were not able to make any evaluation of the relative importance of an applicant's medical history in relation to the accommodation allocated. Secondly, the role of the visiting officers, according to whether they asked applicants about their medical needs and whether they recorded them, was a largely unknown quantity. It was also possible that some applicants were unaware of the potential importance of medical considerations, and, even if asked, would have under-emphasised them. Conversely other applicants who were more familiar with, or confident about, the system would have over-emphasised their medical requirements.

8.15 The nature of our medical data, therefore, was such that we could not use it as a precise, independent factor which might have explained differences found in the quality of allocations made to black and white tenants. However, if medical factors generally were taken into account by allocating officers, it would usually only have been in relation to the allocation of low-floor units, because the consequence of most applicants' medical conditions was that they would be allocated to these types of property. Such

factors as age or type of property and estate size would not be seen as relevant to medical needs. In addition, many of the applicants with medical requirements were likely to have been pensioners, and we had already taken account of this group in our family type variable.

8.16 Table 8.9 shows that there was no appreciable difference in the 'medical needs' recorded between black and white applicants in the homeless access channel, but that there were marked differences in other access channels between the two groups in that white applicants were more likely to have had some reference to medical needs recorded on their file. While the age of applicants may have had some influence on these results, in that black applicants tended to be younger and therefore less likely to have medical problems, this did not in our view explain the substantial differences in some of the percentages. The explanation may well be located in the extent and type of consultation undertaken with applicants by housing visitors and officers when they filled in the relevant report or assessment forms. This could be allied with the fact that certain applicants may have known the system better and ensured that what they considered were their medical problems were included by visitors on their report or assessment forms.

Table 8.6 The Distribution of References to Medical Needs Between Racial Groups (Homeless)

<i>Medical Needs</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Recorded references	31	27	33	29	32	56
No recorded references	69	61	67	60	68	121
	100	88	100	89	100	177

Table 8.7 The Distribution of References to Medical Needs Between Racial Groups (Transfers)

<i>Medical Needs</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Recorded references	38	18	55	76	50	94
No recorded references	62	30	45	63	50	93
	100	48	100	139	100	187

Note: The differences between black and white references are significant at a five per cent level of confidence

Table 8.8 The Distribution of References to Medical Needs Between Racial Groups (Waiting List)

<i>Medical Needs</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Recorded references	26	23	42	40	34	63
No recorded references	74	66	58	56	66	122
	100	89	100	96	100	185

Note: The differences between black and white references are significant at a five per cent level of confidence

Table 8.9 The Distribution of References to Medical Needs Between Racial Groups (Decants)

<i>Medical Needs</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Recorded references	16	15	30	39	24	54
No recorded references	82	82	70	92	76	174
	100	97	100	131	100	228

Note: The differences between black and white references are significant at a five per cent level of confidence

8.17 In fact, from looking at the tables above it is clear that many applicants *were* aware of the possible importance of *claiming* to have medical problems as a ‘bargaining’ counter, for it is difficult to accept that in the transfer and waiting list channels, in particular, such a high proportion of people actually had such significant medical problems that these could justify a particular type of property being allocated to them. In any case, applicants with serious medical needs would have been allocated to a special medical quota after verification of them by the district community physician.

8.18 There is further evidence to show that the discretionary and unstructured nature of the consultation on medical needs between housing visitors and applicants may have led to some applicants being more likely to have needs noted on their files. This evidence stems from the different results produced by the homeless in comparison with other access channels. There was no difference in the recording of medical

requirements between black and white homeless applicants and this is likely to have been because, unlike them, homeless cases, owing to their low 'bargaining' power, were not generally consulted about their requirements. Consequently, applicants did not have the same opportunity to make their own representations about possible medical conditions. Any medical requirements recorded for these applicants stemmed in the main from factual information recorded by housing officers about, for example, time spent in hospital, (for instance, in giving birth to a child), or particular medical problems that had arisen while a family had been living in temporary accommodation. Where medical factors were recorded on this more factual basis, both black and white homeless applicants appear to have had similar medical requirements.

8.19 Despite the limitation on the information collected in this area, allocating officers did not appear to have taken much notice of medical assessments, at least when allocating floor levels, the most relevant consideration. For instance, in the homeless channel, applicants received common medical assessments, but a higher proportion of blacks than whites were allocated to floor levels above the fifth. Conversely, in the transfer channel where there were significant differences in the reference to medical needs, in that whites had a greater proportion of medical references, there was no difference in relation to floor levels between black and white tenants. Further analysis in the other two access channels also showed that where medical requirements were correlated with floor levels, there did not appear to be any special relationship between the two. So those applicants with medical requirements were not allocated disproportionately to what might be considered the more appropriate lower floor levels.

8.20 Our results, therefore, showed that the presence or absence of rent arrears could not explain the different allocation patterns that occurred in the allocation of properties to waiting list and homeless applicants, and nor could they explain the pattern of allocations in the decant channel, even though black decant applicants were found to have been more likely to have had irregular rent records. Among decant tenants with good rent records, blacks fared worse than whites in terms of the quality of property allocated to them.

8.22 We found that medical factors did not provide any explanation for the difference in quality of the properties allocated. We did find however, a disparity in the way this information was recorded, and if Hackney want to continue what would appear to be the reasonable practice of recording medical requirements, we would recommend that the housing department introduce guidelines for any such system. These would deal with how the visitor elicits and notes information, and the way in which allocating officers respond to the comments recorded in files. The exercise of discretion can provide opportunities for discrimination against ethnic minorities, or otherwise disadvantage them.

9. ASSESSMENT OF APPLICANTS BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT

9.1 This chapter deals with the results of our analysis of visiting officers' assessments of applicants' and tenants' housekeeping standards, and consequent suitability for different property types.

9.2 This part of the allocation process constitutes one of the main elements of what we have called 'the informal system', in that no specific guidelines or training were given to officers as to how applicants and tenants should be assessed. In the absence of any method for standardising assessments, therefore, it was inevitable that individual officers would have to exercise their own judgement and discretion. In our view, it is extremely difficult to determine how any objective 'assessment' system could operate fairly when it attempts to measure such intangible factors as housekeeping standards. For example, individual officers may well have differing views about 'good' or 'bad' standards, or make greater or lesser allowance for other factors such as the condition of the property or the number of children, which might affect how a home appears. In addition, the assessments were being made by officers of widely different levels of experience and grading, from specialist housing visitors to resident estate superintendents who in some cases had previously been estate caretakers. We would stress at this point that Hackney has told us that they now no longer record such assessments, which would indicate that it now shares our view of the unreliability of any such measure, which, in any case would appear to have no direct relevance to any individual's degree of housing need.

9.3 What we were concerned with was to see how applicants and tenants were assessed by housing department officers, who at the time of our investigation were virtually all white, and to examine their perception of various applicants. Our aim was to find out if officers tended to favour one particular group of applicants over another. On another level we were also interested to determine, where there were differences in the way black and white applicants were assessed, whether this had influenced the allocation of properties.

9.4 We were informed in some interviews with officers in Hackney that they did not fill in the parts of the assessment forms that related to such factors as 'standards' and suitability for property type, and that, in any case, the allocating officers did not usually take any notice of these references. The majority of the assessment forms we examined, however, had specific references to such 'standards' measurements, and from our review of all the files, we found that most of the sections of the forms that related to these indicators had been filled in by visiting officers.

Housekeeping standards

9.5 Standard of housekeeping is an undefined concept, whereby housing officers give their subjective view of what constitutes a 'good', 'excellent' or 'bad' standard of housekeeping. This might include whether a room was tidy or untidy, clean or dirty, with reference to the standard of decorations.

9.6 In Hackney, on each of the decant, waiting list and transfer assessment forms, there were sections which covered the housekeeping standards of applicants and tenants. For the waiting list and decant groups there were specific questions as to whether the rooms were tidy or untidy, clean or verminous, and so on, and the 'standard' of decoration. The transfer form was phrased slightly differently, and contained an open section for comments on the decorative condition of accommodation, as well as the condition of home and furniture. However, data in relation to 'standards' was not available for homeless cases, because home visits were not generally carried out by housing department officers to homeless applicants, and, consequently, information on home standards was not recorded for this access channel.

9.7 Information was collected on 'standards' for each of the three remaining channels from the assessment forms filled in by the appropriate housing officers, as outlined above. Measurements of 'standards' were then aggregated into the system recorded in Tables 9.1 to 9.3.

Table 9.1 The Recording of Housekeeping Standards Between Different Racial Groups (Transfers)

<i>Housekeeping standards</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
All good/excellent	66	31	70	89	68	120
Mixed tending to 'good'	30	14	20	26	23	40
Mixed tending to 'bad'	4	2	9	12	8	14
All 'bad'	0	0	1	1	1	1
	100	47	100	128	100	175

Table 9.2 The Recording of Housekeeping Standards Between Different Racial Groups (Waiting List)

<i>Housekeeping standards</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
All good/excellent	50	40	81	71	66	111
Mixed tending to 'good'	40	32	17	15	28	47
Mixed tending to 'bad'	10	8	2	2	6	10
All 'bad'	0	0	0	0	0	0
	100	80	100	88	100	168

Note: The difference between black and white applicants in the 'all good/excellent' category is significant at a one per cent level of confidence

Table 9.3 The Recording of Housekeeping Standards Between Different Racial Groups (Decants)

<i>Housekeeping standards</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
All good/excellent	48	44	66	81	54	114
Mixed tending to 'good'	23	21	16	20	19	41
Mixed tending to 'bad'	22	20	15	18	18	38
All 'bad'	7	7	3	3	9	10
	100	92	100	122	100	214

Notes: (i) The difference between black and white applicants in the 'all good/excellent' category is significant at a one per level
(ii) The difference between black and white applicants in the 'all bad' category is significant at a five per cent level

9.8 Tables 9.1 to 9.3 show that in each of the three access channels, the majority of applicants had some reference to housekeeping standards on their files. Generally, transfer applicants received the better 'grading', followed by the decant and waiting list channels. The main differences that occurred between black and white applicants were in these latter two channels. In the waiting list (Table 9.2), white applicants were more likely to have received all 'good/excellent' gradings (81 per cent) than black applicants (50 per cent). A similar pattern occurred in the decant channel (Table 9.3) where, again, white tenants were more likely to have received all 'good/excellent' gradings (66 per cent) than black tenants (48 per cent). In the decant channel, black applicants were also more likely to have received the poorer-standard gradings, with 29 per cent receiving this kind of assessment.

9.9 The major differences that occurred in the waiting list and decant channels were between the gradings of all 'good' or 'excellent', and 'mixed to good', the former being unreservedly positive and the latter expressed in more ambivalent terms. White applicants were far more likely than black to have

received the best grades, black applicants tending to receive the less emphatic grading coded as ‘mixed to good’.

9.10 While on the surface both these codings would appear to be advantageous to all applicants, there may have been, in terms of possible interpretation by the allocating officer, a difference between a tenant, particularly one in competition with a tenant with ‘lower’ standards, who had all ‘good/excellent’ standards, compared with another whose standards were expressed in the more ambivalent way. From the evidence of this data it was possible that white applicants might ultimately have received better-quality accommodation because of their greater tendency to receive very positive assessments compared with black applicants. In addition, in the decant channel, black applicants received a relatively high proportion of ‘poor’ standards ratings. We will be considering whether these relationships hold good later in this chapter.

Suitability for property type

9.11 As with the gradings of ‘standards’ there were specific boxes in the assessment forms used for the decant, transfer and waiting list channels, in which visiting officers indicated their recommendations for the type of property that should be allocated to applicants. These included the gradings; new, late post-war and conversion, although there were some slight differences in the precise terminology used in each access channel assessment form. We recorded these recommendations and later re-aggregated them into the scheme shown in Tables 9.4 to 9.6. For example, where officers only recommended ‘new’, this was coded accordingly, and if they recommended ‘new’ with, for instance, ‘late post-war’ this was put into the ‘includes new’ category. As with the ‘standards’ data, this information was not available for the homeless access channel.

Table 9.4 Recommendations Made About Suitability for the Allocation of Particular Property Types Between Racial Groups (Transfers)

<i>Property type</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only new	11	4	26	30	22	34
Includes new	81	30	65	75	69	105
Not new (includes late and early post-war)	5	2	8	10	8	12
Only pre-war conversion	3	1	1	1	1	2
	100	37	100	116	100	153

Table 9.5 Recommendations Made About Suitability for the Allocation of Particular Property Types Between Racial Groups (Waiting List)

<i>Property type</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only new	12	10	29	25	21	35
Includes new	71	58	69	60	70	118
Not new (includes late and early post-war)	17	14	2	2	9	16
Only pre-war conversion	0	0	0	0	0	0
	100	82	100	87	100	169

Notes: (i) The difference between black and white applicants in the ‘only new’ category is significant at a one per cent level
(ii) The difference between black and white applicants in the ‘not new (includes late and early post-war)’ category is significant at a one per cent level

Table 9.6 Recommendations Made About Suitability for the Allocation of Particular Property Types Between Racial Groups (Decants)

<i>Property type</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only new	9	8	14	15	12	23
Includes new	56	49	67	72	62	121
Not new (includes late and early post-war)	29	25	16	17	21	42
Only pre-war conversion	6	5	3	4	5	9
	100	87	100	108	100	195

Note: The difference between black and white applicants when the two categories of ‘not new (includes late and early post-war) and ‘only pre-war conversion’ are combined is significant at a five per cent level of confidence

9.12 Tables 9.4-9.6 show that generally this assessment was completed by most visiting officers, and that their recommendation about the applicants’ or tenants’ suitability for a particular property type was passed on to allocating officers. While recommendations for ‘only new’ properties and ‘includes new’ properties referred to in the tables are positive recommendations, we again felt that there could be a qualitative difference between the two comments, particularly when viewed from the position of the allocation officers. A recommendation for ‘only new’ property is a much more positive recommendation than one where several property types are recommended, including, for example, both ‘new’ and ‘late and early post-war’ properties. The difference in these comments is very similar to that which separated the concepts of all ‘good/excellent’ standards and ‘mixed to good’ ones referred to in relation to housekeeping standards.

9.13 The main patterns that the tables show in terms of differences between black and white applicants and tenants is that in the waiting list channel there was a marked difference in the ‘best’ recommendation category, in that only 12 per cent of black applicants were recommended for ‘only new’ properties compared with 29 per cent of white applicants. On the other hand, black applicants were more likely to receive the more ambivalent recommendations of ‘not new and includes late and early post-war’ (17 per cent), compared with white applicants (two per cent). In the decant channel, all tenants were generally less likely to have received ‘positive’ recommendations than in the others. Black applicants, however, received a greater number of ‘negative’ recommendations (35 per cent) than white tenants (19 per cent).

9.14 There was again no formal procedure in Hackney to determine which ‘type’ of family should be allocated to these different types of property, and any recommendation was based essentially on a personal appraisal of the applicants and tenants visited by an individual housing officer. We have made some attempt to see how the logic of these recommendations worked, and whether, for example, the assessment of housekeeping standards and the applicants’ or tenants’ rent record played a part in the recommendation made on suitability for property type.

9.15 For instance, in relation to the waiting list, where in terms of allocation blacks consistently received poor-quality accommodation than whites, Tables 9.2 and 9.5 show there was a relationship between grading standards and recommendations on suitability for property type. Fewer blacks than white applicants received recommendations for the ‘only new’ properties, reflecting the housekeeping ‘standards’ gradings.

9.16 However, while there was some consistency in the way individual applicants were assessed on subjective criteria such as grading, there was no clear connection with some of the more formal objective criteria such as rent arrears. While it might have been expected that applicants might well have received poorer recommendations or gradings if they had a history of rent arrears; within the waiting list, black applicants were in fact found to have been no more likely to have had this than white ones, although blacks received poorer gradings than whites. It would therefore appear that housing officers’ recommendations for property types stemmed predominantly from their personal appraisal of applicants, rather than from any fact such as rent arrears.

9.17 At the stage of grading by housing visitors, it is clear from the above results that black applicants did not do as well as white ones in terms of 'positive' assessments. We therefore considered it important to determine whether this had had any direct influence on the actual properties that had been allocated. Consequently, we obtained further data which related 'gradings' and 'recommendations' to relevant property indicators. This data showed that there was, at best, only a limited relationship between the 'best' gradings and the most desirable properties (new) in that a majority of tenants who had received new properties had had the best gradings and recommendations.

9.18 However, the overall pattern showed that there was not usually a strong relationship between the relative gradings and the actual allocation of property. For instance, we found that some of the applicants, both black and white, with the 'best' grades also received a high proportion of the less desirable 'post-war' and 'inter-war' properties. In particular when housekeeping standards were examined in relation to our age-coding data, on the waiting list channel, for example, it revealed that 13 per cent of the black sample who had been allocated inter-war properties had all received good/excellent grades compared with three per cent of the white sample allocated to such property. In the post-war category, our results showed that of the applicants and tenants who had been allocated these types of property, 41 per cent of whites and 21 per cent of blacks had been given the 'best' housekeeping standard gradings. Allocating officers, therefore, did not necessarily take notice of gradings when allocating properties.

9.19 In our view, the types of gradings and recommendations received by black and white applicants and tenants did not appear to be a determinant factor unrelated to racial origin which could explain why black applicants and tenants received overall poorer-quality properties than their white counterparts.

9.20 Even if these gradings had matched the pattern of allocation, we did not accept that such an unreliable system could justify different allocations. However, while allocating officers did not appear to respond always to 'assessments' by housing visitors, the way in which such factors as housekeeping standards were recorded gave some insight into the perceptions of housing department officers, and particularly in the way in which they assessed black and white applicants and tenants. We considered that the difference in assessment, with whites doing better than blacks, reflected part of a (possibly unconscious) stereotyping process, and this in turn may have meant that the black applicants received less positive 'input' than white ones. This is not to say that black applicants were receiving negative treatment or assessments, rather that housing officers may have been more willing to encourage and 'push' for white applicants, as epitomised by their positive recommendations.

9.21 Hackney has now abolished these types of grading, and we welcome this. As there did not appear to be a direct link between the 'grading' and the actual allocation of properties in Hackney, there was absolutely no point in keeping such records in any case. However, as our results show that black tenants and applicants did not receive as good gradings as whites, it is possible that this grading of this kind could potentially be a factor in the process of discrimination against ethnic minorities. We would therefore recommend that such grading systems should be abolished by housing departments.

10. AREA PREFERENCES, OFFERS AND REFUSALS

10.1 Two factors which could have influenced black applicants receiving more poor-quality property than white ones were expressed geographical preferences, and the way offers of accommodation were made and refusals allowed.

10.2 For instance, if black applicants tended to ask to be rehoused in areas where the quality of housing was poor, this might have provided an explanation of why, in overall comparison with whites, they received properties of lower quality. In relation to offers and refusals of property, black applicants might, for one reason or another, have tended to accept their first offer of housing, instead of holding out for better-quality offers of accommodation. Again, this could have formed the basis of an explanation for the different patterns of allocation found in our study.

10.3 Apart from determining whether these factors had influenced the different patterns of allocations, we were also concerned to find out, if they had had such an influence, the way in which this had happened. For example, had the borough operated its area preference system to the advantage of white applicants? This might be done, for instance, by housing visitors not bothering to inform particular applicants of the possibilities of stating area preferences, or not giving details of the implications, in terms of delays in offers being made, of asking for accommodation in a particular area. With regard to offers and refusals, some applicants may have been 'persuaded' into accepting a low-quality offer of accommodation while others were allowed to refuse these types to wait for an improved one.

10.4 None of the data in either of these areas, in fact, helped to explain the differences in the quality of property allocated to black and white applicants. Although Hackney at the time of our study, in common with many other housing departments, had a rather *ad hoc* and discretionary method of obtaining the area preferences of applicants, and a relatively unstructured offer and refusal system, the end results were very similar for all applicants and tenants. We therefore deal only very briefly with the results of this part of our investigation.

Area preference data

10.5 As we have already mentioned, the role of the visiting officer is primarily one of verification, assessment and the giving of advice, coupled with the acquisition of some information about applicants' and tenants' own wishes. In Hackney, the main point on which applicants and tenants were consulted was the geographical area in which they would like to live. Hackney did not have any formal system for collecting information on whether an applicant might want a house or flat, for example, as occurs with some other local authorities.

10.6 Results from the area preference data we collected showed that, unlike a city such as Birmingham, Hackney is not divided into fairly distinct zones which contain particular types and ages of property. For instance, Birmingham has an inner zone which tends to contain older, more 'undesirable' properties. In Hackney, however, the quality of property is diverse over all areas, so that in a specific district, as defined by a London post-code, for example, there will generally be a mix of better and poorer-quality accommodation. An expressed area preference does not therefore determine whether the actual allocation is of good or poor quality.

10.7 We reviewed the broad pattern of allocations to see if black and white applicants were tending to be located in any particular areas of the borough. If such a pattern existed, we intended to carry out further research to verify whether there was any relationship with quality of properties, to consider the implications of this for future housing policy. Our results showed, in fact, that there was no consistent overall pattern, and that black and white applicants in each of their respective access channels were allocated in similar proportions throughout the borough. We concluded, therefore, that the variable of area was not an issue that was relevant as an explanation for the differences that occurred between black and white applicants in relation to their allocated accommodation.

10.8 In general, housing officers did not have formal instruction or specific training about the way in which they ascertained preferences, and might or might not recommend particular areas of Hackney. For instance, some officers might have pointed out to applicants that there were very few available properties in one particular area, and suggested that they might receive a quicker offer from another area. Other officers may either not have known, or not have taken account of this, and noted down whatever the

tenant said. These differences in approach between officers might have had implications for the preferences expressed and, in turn, for the eventual offers tenants received. We therefore looked at the way the expressed area preferences had been recorded, to determine whether blacks and whites had been treated equally. Our results showed that there was very little difference between whites and blacks in relation to the data collected on preferences. The only difference was that white applicants were marginally more likely to have been allocated to their *first* choice of area, although this was too small for any great significance to be attached to it.

10.9 Further data was also collected during the course of tenant interviews to show whether applicants considered their homes were in the areas they recalled mentioning as their preferences areas to housing department officers. Black tenants tended to feel that they had *not* received the preference area they asked for to a greater extent than white applicants. The comparative figures for each access channel were that 26 per cent of blacks from the waiting list considered that they had not received their preference area, compared with 17 per cent of whites; in the homeless channel, 26 per cent of blacks compared with 19 per cent of whites; in the decant channel, 23 per cent of blacks compared with 16 per cent of whites; and in the transfer channel, 19 per cent of blacks compared with 12 per cent of whites. These differences are relatively small and need to be treated with some caution, as they are based on tenants' recollections of what might have occurred some months beforehand. However, they give some indication of the tenants' perspectives, and may in part reflect black tenants' dissatisfaction with the quality of accommodation they actually received.

Offers and refusals

10.10 The offer and refusal process constituted part of the 'bargaining' system by which applicants might or might not have ensured that they received accommodation of a reasonable quality. In Hackney, the extent to which such 'bargaining power' could be used reflected the different 'status' of applicants in each access channel, in that homeless applicants were usually only allowed one offer,¹ while decant cases could often hold out for several.

10.11 Except for homeless cases, there were no defined limits to the numbers of offers that could be made, and so this system was not a strictly formal one, with the result that a certain amount of discretion could again be exercised by individual allocating officers.

10.12 As previously mentioned, the offer and refusal system was examined in order to determine whether it offered any 'explanation' for some of the different patterns of allocation found between black and white applicants within individual access channels, and whether all applicants were treated equitably in the number of offers made. Any differences that may have emerged were likely to have been as a result of one of the following factors. Firstly, a particular group of applicants may have found it easier to refuse a first or second offer, whereas another group may have been under greater pressure from housing department officers to accept a first offer. Secondly, particular groups of applicants may have been more familiar with the 'system', or known how to use it, so that they were aware that they would be allowed to refuse a certain number of offers in particular access channels. Thirdly, certain groups already living in poor housing conditions may have been less inclined to refuse an allocation of a relatively poor-quality offer of accommodation, even as perceived by them, because it may have been better than their present accommodation.

10.13 In general, our results did not show either substantially different or conclusive patterns between black and white applicants. The main results were:

(a) Black and white applicants and tenants had a similar knowledge of the offer and refusal system. Most considered that they were entitled to three offers of accommodation, this being based on what they had 'heard from others', and not because of any formal information they had been given by the housing department.

(b) Overall, applicants in the waiting list, transfer and decant channels accepted their first offer of accommodation, with decant applicants being the least likely to accept their first offer, reflecting their relatively strong 'bargaining' position. In relation to the homeless channel, the rules concerning the limited number of offers allowed were borne out in practice, in that nearly all homeless applicants were allowed only one offer of accommodation. In practice, 91 per cent of all these cases accepted their first offer, with no difference occurring between black and white applicants.

(c) There were few differences between black and white applicants and tenants as to whether they accepted their first offer of accommodation. There were also no significant differences in respect of applicants' and tenants' recollections of whether they considered refusing their offers of accommodation and what consequent action ensued in terms of the housing department response. For instance, the majority of

responses that all applicants received from the housing department were ‘unsupportive’, in that they had been told that they would not be offered anything else, or that they would have to wait a long time, if they refused their offer.

(d) The results of the final set of data collected on why tenants accepted their offers of accommodation showed that black applicants were marginally more likely than white ones to have accepted their accommodation for ‘negative’ reasons. That is, they accepted the property because they felt that had no choice, or thought that they would be offered nothing better. White applicants were more likely to have accepted their accommodation for ‘positive’ reasons, such as that the property was what the applicant wanted, it was modern, or had a garden. However, the differences that occurred between white and black in respect of this source of data were relatively small, and probably reflect some dissatisfaction resulting from the fact that black tenants were generally more likely to be living in poor-quality accommodation than white ones.

10.14 The results presented briefly in this chapter show that preference areas, and the offer and refusal systems, do not explain the different patterns of allocation between blacks and whites referred to in earlier chapters. They also show generally that black and white applicants in their respective access channels appear to have been treated in the same way by the housing department in relation to these two areas. However, as in other sections of this part of the report, we are concerned about the unstructured and discretionary way in which the preference area, and offer and refusal systems worked during the period of our study. Recently, Hackney has introduced a far more structured area preference system, where options available are set out and applicants can consider these and then make their choice. We welcome this change and note that Hackney is giving further consideration to refining and improving this initiative. An important component of any such system is that housing officers responsible for visiting should clearly know how the system operates and what is expected of them. With regard to offers and refusals, we believe that the housing department should attempt to formalise the system to a greater extent. While we recognise that there will always be a need for some flexibility in the operation of any offer and refusal system, we are concerned that there is no specific guidance about how many offers applicants are likely to be allowed. This potentially gives housing officers a wide discretion, and might work to the disadvantage of particular groups of applicants. We therefore recommend that the offer and refusal systems should be made explicit, particularly where there is such a limit, applicants should be told how many offers are usually allowed. As previously mentioned, the housing department is currently reviewing its practices and policies on allocations. One of the requirements of our Non-Discrimination Notice is that this should be conducted with reference to racial discrimination and the provision of equal opportunity, and we would hope that changes initiated as a result of this review would include the way the offer and refusal system operates.

NOTE

1. Since July 1982, Hackney has amended this policy and homeless families have been entitled to a maximum of three offers.

11. THE DETERMINATION OF ETHNIC ORIGIN FROM REVIEW OF TENANT’S FILE

11.1 As referred to in Chapter 2, Hackney housing department does not keep ethnic records, and it was therefore considered at the outset of our investigation that if discriminatory, or disadvantageous, patterns of allocation were discovered in its course, the local authority might argue that it could not discriminate because it did not know the ethnic origin of applicants and tenants. It was therefore decided that when we were collecting data from tenants’ files, one of the variables we would attempt to record was whether ethnic origin could be determined from any reference on individual files. Two items of information were recorded:

- (a) the ethnic origin of the applicant or tenant if it could be obtained from the file;
- (b) the reason why it was considered that the applicant or tenant was of this ethnic origin.

11.2 Reasons for considering an applicant or tenant was of a particular ethnic origin were coded under three headings, by specific reference on a file, secondly; by our own assumption, for example, a deduction based on the name of the applicant; and thirdly, by a combination of both, this latter always including the specific reference to racial origin. The data recorded in this way was later matched up with the actual ethnicity of applicants and tenants collected in the tenant survey. It should be noted that we had no prior knowledge of the ethnicity of applicants at the time we were reviewing files.

11.3 The logic in undertaking this exercise was that if, after a *brief* review of the files, the ethnic origin of a fair number of applicants could be determined, it would be reasonable to assume that Hackney housing allocation officers, with their greater familiarity with the cases, must also have been aware of *at least* the same proportion of applicants’ ethnic origin. They may also in some cases have had direct contact with tenants and applicants or discussed cases with other officers who had had such contact.

11.4 Tables 11.2 to 11.8 show the results of the information collected. The data covers the four major access channels as well as the two individual estates and the GLC homeless sample dealt with in the final chapters of this report. In the tables, the ethnicity shown in the column on the left refers to what was recorded in relation to file information. The column at the top refers to the *actual* ethnicity of tenants as recorded from face-to-face tenant interviews. The accuracy of provisional assessments made of ethnicity can therefore be measured by comparing the assessed references of the left column with specific headings at the top of each column. For instance, in Table 11.1 it can be seen that the left column, showing references to assessed black ethnicity, registers 51 per cent underneath the column that refers to the actual ethnicity of tenants. This means in effect that in 51 per cent of cases, blacks are correctly identified as to ethnicity by reference to the files.

Table 11.1 Actual Ethnicity and File Assessment of Ethnicity, From Tenant Interviews (Homeless)

File data assessment	Black		White		Greek/Turkish	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Black	51	45	10	8	10	1
White	1	1	24	20	0	0
Greek/Turkish	0	0	0	0	70	7
Not known	48	42	66	55	20	2
	100	88	100	83	100	10

Table 11.2 Actual Ethnicity and File Assessment of Ethnicity, From Tenant Interviews (Transfers)

<i>File data assessment</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Greek/Turkish</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Black	58	28	5	6	60	3
White	4	2	49	66	0	0
Greek/Turkish	2	1	0.5	1	40	2
Not known	36	17	45.5	61	0	0
	100	48	100	134	100	5

Table 11.3 Actual Ethnicity and File Assessment of Ethnicity, From Tenant Interviews (Waiting List)

<i>File data assessment</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Greek/Turkish</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Black	55	48	13	12	20	2
White	1	1	23	21	0	0
Greek/Turkish	0	0	1	1	70	7
Not known	44	38	63	58	10	1
	100	87	100	92	100	10

Table 11.4 Actual Ethnicity and File Assessment of Ethnicity, From Tenant Interviews (Decants)

<i>File data assessment</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Greek/Turkish</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Black	65	63	6	8	30	3
White	2	2	49	62	0	0
Greek/Turkish	1	1	0	0	70	7
Not known	32	31	45	58	0	0
	100	97	100	128	100	10

Table 11.5 Actual Ethnicity and File Assessment, From Tenant Interviews (Stonebridge Estate)

<i>File data Assessment</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Greek/Turkish</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Black	60	50	6	6	40	4
White	0	0	45	41	0	0
Greek/Turkish	0	0	0	0	40	4
Not Known	40	34	49	45	20	2
	100	84	100	92	100	8

Table 11.6 Actual Ethnicity and File Assessment of Ethnicity, From Tenant Interviews (Holly Street)

<i>File data assessment</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Greek/Turkish</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Black	71.5	45	1	1	20	1
White	1.5	1	59	41	0	0
Greek/Turkish	0	0	1	1	60	3
Not known	27	17	39	28	20	5
	100	63	100	71	100	5

Table 11.7 Actual Ethnicity and File Assessment of Ethnicity, From Tenant Interviews (GLC Homeless)

<i>File data assessment</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Greek/Turkish</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Black	67	18	3	1	6	1
White	4	1	45	13	0	0
Greek/Turkish	0	0	0	0	88	14
Not known	30	8	52	15	6	1
	100	27	100	29	100	16

Table 11.8 Actual Ethnicity and File Assessment of Ethnicity, From Tenant Interviews (Sample Totals)

<i>File data assessment</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Greek/Turkish</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Black	60	297	7	42	23	15
White	2	8	42	264	0	0
Greek/Turkish		2		3	67	44
Not known	38	187	51	320	10	7
	100	494	100	692	100	66

11.5 Overall, ethnicity of tenants was correctly established for 60 per cent of black tenants, 42 per cent of whites and 67 per cent of Greeks/Turkish. Specific results show, for instance, that the proportion of correctly assessed black ethnicity was 71.5 per cent for the Holly Street estate (Table 11.6); 67 per cent for the GLC homeless sample (Table 11.7); 65 per cent for the decant sample (Table 11.4); and 55 per cent in the waiting list sample (Table 11.3). The other results on ethnic minority data record roughly similar results.

11.6 For those cases where ethnicity was correctly identified further tables have been produced to show how it was determined from the files, that is, by specific reference to it or by deductions by Commission researchers. The results gained in relation to each of the access channels, the individual estates, and the GLC were very similar, and Table 11.9 amalgamates them. It shows that the ethnic origin of 49 per cent of black tenants was identified by *specific* references to their ethnicity on files, and that 37 per cent was identified by deduction, based on such factors as surnames. Fourteen per cent was a combination of both. Therefore in terms of the important measure of specific reference to ethnicity, the total for black recordings of this type was 63 per cent. The equivalent totals of white tenants with *specific* references on the files were 23 per cent; by deduction; 73 per cent, and a combination of both four per cent.

Table 11.9 How Ethnicity of Tenants was Determined From the Files

<i>How ethnicity determined</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Greek/Turkish</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No
By specific Reference on file	49	144	23	60	39	17	37	223
By deduction	37	111	73	193	30	13	52	320
Both	14	42	4	11	29	14	11	67
	100	297	100	264	100	44	100	610

11.7 The results presented in this chapter reveal that the ethnic origin of black tenants tended to be identified to a greater extent than white ones. This result is predictable in that it is probably more likely that housing officers would make specific references to the country of origin of black applicants and tenants rather than white applicants and tenants. It is also probably easier to deduce the ethnic origin of black applicants from their names than whites.

11.8 Generally, the ethnicity of tenants was correctly identified from the files to a quite remarkable extent, given that Hackney do not formally keep ethnic records. The number of correct identifications of ethnicity for black tenants was particularly high, the majority of these based on specific references on the file to racial origin. In fact, when the tables are viewed in conjunction with one another it is found that a total of *38 per cent of all black tenants* included in the survey had some *specific reference* to ethnic origin on their files.

11.9 At the end of this report we refer to some of the actions that Hackney has taken in the light of our results. One of the most important initiatives taken is the introduction of ethnic record keeping, coupled with planned, comprehensive monitoring programmes. We welcome this, and would argue that the results outlined above, which are likely to be common to many other housing departments, provide a powerful case for such keeping of ethnic records and subsequent monitoring in local authorities throughout the country. In particular, the results help to invalidate a common argument sometimes put against ethnic records: that if allocators know the ethnicity of applicants they would be able to discriminate against certain groups. Clearly, as has often been suspected, allocating officers frequently know the ethnicity of applicants whether it is by specific references on files, by deductions based on factors such as surnames, or by information passed on by other officers. In fact, we would recommend that specific passing references to an applicant's ethnicity on files unrelated to their housing requirements should not be made. However, even if these references are removed, officers will often know the ethnicity of applicants anyway, and for this reason, allied with the main aim of ensuring equality in the allocation of housing, we recommend formal systems of ethnic record keeping. Such systems should be properly monitored in that they would be fully accountable in terms of their operation, and lead to policy changes and initiatives if results showed patterns of discrimination or disadvantage.

PART IV

12. THE STONEBRIDGE AND HOLLY STREET ESTATES

13. THE ESTATES AND THE ALLOCATION PROCESS

**14. THE ROLE OF THE GREATER LONDON COUNCIL IN HACKNEY'S
HOMELESS ALLOCATIONS**

12. THE STONEBRIDGE AND HOLLY STREET ESTATES

12.1 We included a detailed study of two estates in Hackney in the investigation to provide some historical perspective in terms of the end results of the borough's allocation policies over a period of years, to supplement the main study of allocations based on the four major access channels. We would stress, however, that the two estates chosen should not be seen as representative of all estates in Hackney. We selected these because they were known to be in environmentally poor condition and to have a high proportion of black residents. We wished, in particular, to examine how black tenants had come to be over-represented on poor-quality estates, the factors which had been involved in this and the way in which they related to the practices and procedures operated by the housing department. Although we considered a number of estates in Hackney which fulfilled these criteria, we chose Stonebridge and Holly Street because they also provided a contrast with one another in terms of their age, size and type of construction. The Stonebridge estate was a medium-sized one containing 311 units of accommodation, most of them built before the Second World War, or shortly afterwards. Whereas Holly Street, with 1,086 units of accommodation was both larger and newer, having been completed in 1970-1.

The Stonebridge estate

12.2 The Stonebridge estate is situated in Haggerston, South-East Hackney, between Kingsland Road and Queenbridge Road. At the time of our survey it comprised eight blocks, four built in 1935, three in 1947 and one, Acton House, in the early 1950s. More than two-thirds of the flats were two or three-bedroomed and the rest were one bedroomed, apart from a small number of four-bedroomed properties. The estate had been described as one of the worst in Hackney and, after reviewing its future several times, the housing committee decided in 1980 that, with the exception of Acton House, the remainder would be demolished. As we have been preparing this report, three of the blocks have already been demolished and rebuilding on the site should be completed by May 1985. The demolition of three more blocks will then commence, and when rebuilding is complete, the final block will be demolished and the site redeveloped.

12.3 In November 1979 the director of housing prepared a report for the borough's housing management committee in response to concern expressed by some of its members at the disproportionate number of ethnic minority tenants on Stonebridge. This report rejected the possibility that letting procedures were discriminatory, and argued that ethnic minority tenants formed a high proportion of the estate's population because they also formed a relatively high proportion of the groups with low bargaining power, such as homeless and waiting list applicants allocated to the estate over a number of years. The report suggested that the borough's pre-war modernisation programme would make the most significant contribution to providing ethnic minority groups with good housing conditions, because the displaced tenants would become decant cases and, therefore, have a good choice of alternative accommodation. However, although such modernisation programmes may have the effect of moving both black and white tenants up the housing quality ladder, as our results in Chapter 5 show, even when black tenants became decants, they were not treated equally in all respects to white tenants.

The Holly Street estate

12.4 Although Holly Street is newer than Stonebridge, it has also been recognised by Hackney to be in the category of difficult-to-let. It is situated roughly in the centre of the borough, about a quarter of a mile from Dalston Junction. It has four tower blocks, each 20 storeys high and containing 114 one or two-bedroom flats, and nineteen low-rise blocks, which are four or five storeys high. These low-rise blocks range in size from 10 to 56 units of accommodation, and contain one or two-bedroom flats or three-bedroom maisonettes. There are very few four-bedroom properties on the estate. Holly Street itself runs north/south through the estate, with the tower blocks situated on the east side and the low-rise blocks on the west side.

12.5 The estate was mainly completed in 1970-1 and, when let as new, may have been desirable. However, the estate design, particularly on the low-rise blocks, led to severe problems. A report to the Council's housing development committee in June 1979 attributed these problems to:

- (a) Design faults, including poor sound insulation, which caused friction between tenants; long internal corridors in the low-rise blocks used by children as play areas; large open spaces for which tenants had no responsibility; and inadequate drainage, both of open space within the estate and land bordering it;
- (b) The pattern of allocations to the estate had resulted in a very high level of child density; in 1979, 30 per cent of the estate's overall population was under 16, and in some blocks the proportion rose above 40

- per cent, leading to a major vandalism problem;
- (c) Outstanding maintenance work on the estate was said to be reaching crisis proportions; and
- (d) The heating ducts in the low-rise blocks had become infested with Pharoah ants.

Hackney has embarked on a programme of estate improvement, but financial constraints and the degree of housing need in the borough have limited the extent to which major improvements involving large-scale decanting could be pursued.

The survey of the estates

12.6 We sampled the whole of Stonebridge’s population in January 1981 and obtained interview responses from 214 households or 70 per cent of the population. As Holly Street is a much larger estate, it was not feasible to approach all tenants, and our sample of the population in January 1981 covered 156 households, approximately 15 per cent. In this chapter we shall examine the ethnic composition of the populations as shown by our samples; the periods at which tenants were allocated to the estates; the access channels from which they came; and the distribution of family types within the ethnic groups. As with the four main access channels, we shall then go on in Chapter 13 to compare black and white tenants in relation to a variety of factors which might have affected their allocation to these poor-quality estates, including low-demand allocations; rent arrears; reasons for homelessness; housekeeping standards; visitor’s recommendations on suitability for particular types of property, and offer and refusal rates.

The ethnic composition of the estates’ populations

12.7 As Table 12.1 shows, the proportions of black and white tenants on Stonebridge and Holly Street, as indicated by our samples of the estate’s populations in January 1981, were very similar; in each case almost half of our samples were black. We had, of course, chosen the estate because black tenants were over-represented on them. NDHS figures showing the ethnic origins of tenants overall in Council housing in Hackney are given for comparison.

Table 12.1 Estate Population by Ethnic Origin of Head of Household, January 1981
(Stonebridge and Holly Street)

<i>Estate</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Greek/Turkish</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No
Stonebridge	45	86	48	103	7	15	100	214
Holly Street	46	71	49	77	5	8	100	156
NDHS: Council Sector: head of household	15	0	76	0	9	0	100	0

Ethnic distribution and time of allocation

12.8 In order to build up a picture of when black and white tenants arrived at these estates, we examined patterns of allocation over different periods of time. In order to identify evidence which would relate to discrimination as defined by the 1976 Race Relations Act which came into force in June 1977, we broadly separated our results into allocations over the three-year period 1977 to 1980, and over the 10-year period 1970 to 1980. However, because of the difference in the age of the two estates, for Stonebridge we also identified those tenants in our sample who had been living there before 1970. In relation to Holly Street, which did not exist before 1970, we divided the early years of its existence into two periods, 1970 to 1975 and 1975 to 1977, in order to differentiate between allocations made in the earliest years when the estate was new, and therefore desirable; the intervening period, when the estate’s problems began to emerge; and the final period, covered by the 1976 Act, when the estate had become difficult-to-let. We must, however, emphasise that the picture of the estate which emerges is based on inferences drawn from ‘a snapshot’ of their populations in January 1981. We could not take account of tenants who had moved away from the estate in the intervening years and our results must be seen in this context.

The Stonebridge estate

12.9 Our sample of the population of Stonebridge in January 1981 shows that 65 per cent of the estate's population, that is, 140 households, had been allocated there during the preceding 10 years, 1970 to 1980, and that 74 of these households had moved onto the estate within the last three years, 1977 to 1980. A high proportion of these tenants were of ethnic minority origin, being either black or Greek/Turkish. Over the whole period, 63 per cent of allocations were to ethnic minorities, compared with 36 per cent to whites. This trend continued at the end of the period, between 1977 and 1980, when 58 per cent of allocations were to ethnic minorities compared with 41 per cent to whites. Of the 50 households in our sample who had lived on the estate for more than 10 years, 40 were white and 10 black.

12.10 The picture of Stonebridge which can be inferred from Table 12.2, therefore, is that up to the 1960s, its population was predominantly white, but after 1970, there was a very high turnover of tenants, with many white households moving off the estate to be replaced with increasingly large numbers of ethnic minority ones.

Table 12.2 Allocations to Stonebridge between 1970-80 and 1977-80, by Ethnic Origin

Ethnic origin	1970-80		1977-80	
	%	No	%	No
White	36	50	41	30
Black	56	78	46	34
Greek/Turkish	7	10	12	9
Other	1	2	1	1
	100	140	100	74

Note: Of tenants in our sample who had lived on the estate for more than 10 years, 40 were white and 10 were black

The Holly Street Estate

12.11 From our sample of the population of Holly Street in January 1981, it appears that allocation in terms of ethnicity have varied considerably since the estate was built in 1970. Understandably, two-thirds of the tenants in our sample had been allocated to Holly Street in the early years, when the estate became available for letting. However, 14 per cent of our sample of allocations took place between 1975 and 1977, and 21 per cent between 1977 and 1980. As Table 12.3 shows, there is a very clear pattern of a higher proportion of white tenants being allocated to the estate in the early years when it was new and a higher proportion of black tenants moving onto the estate in later years when the serious problems already mentioned in paragraph 12.5 had emerged. Among our sample of the estate's population, between 1970 and 1975, 63 per cent of allocations were to whites and 31 per cent to blacks. Between 1975 and 1977, the properties changed, to 33 per cent white and 57 per cent black, and between 1977 and 1980 to 23 per cent white and 77 per cent black.

Table 12.3 Allocations to Holly Street Between 1970-80, 1970-75, 1975-77 and 1977-80, by Ethnic Origin

Ethnic origin	1970-80		1970-75		1975-77		1977-80	
	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No
White	51	74	63	60	33	7	23	7
Black	44	64	31	29	57	12	77	23
Greek/Turkish	3	5	3	3	10	2	0	0
Other	2	3	3	3	0	0	0	0
	100	146	100	95	100	21	100	30

Distribution of estate populations by access channel

12.12 Our sample of residents on Stonebridge and Holly Street in January 1981 indicated that there were differences between the estates in terms of the access channels through which the majority of allocations had come. On Stonebridge, as Table 12.4 shows, homeless families formed the largest group of allocations, 53 per cent, over the whole period 1970 to 1980, and between 1977 and 1980, when their proportion was 47 per cent. Waiting list families formed the second largest proportion of allocations to Stonebridge, that is, 31 per cent over the period 1970 to 1980, and 39 per cent between 1977 and 1980. Of all the tenants in our sample of Stonebridge's population, 84 per cent came from these two access channels.

Table 12.4 Allocations to Stonebridge Between 1970-80 and 1977-80, by Access Channel

<i>Access channel</i>	<i>1970-80</i>		<i>1977-80</i>	
	%	No	%	No
Homeless	53	74	47	35
Waiting list	31	43	39	29
Decants	6	8	6	4
Transfers	3	5	2	2
Other	7	10	6	4
	100	140	100	74

12.13 As Table 12.5 shows, on Holly Street over the same periods, 1970 to 1980 and 1977 to 1980, the largest proportion of tenants in our sample came from the waiting list, and between 1977 and 1980, these formed 57 per cent of allocations. Unlike Stonebridge, the proportion of homeless allocations to Holly Street was relatively small, and remained almost static throughout the period. During the later years 1977 to 1980, the proportion of decants, allocated to Holly Street to which Hackney gave high priority in terms of quality of accommodation, declined significantly.

Table 12.5 Allocations to Holly Street Between 1970-80 and 1977-80, by Access Channel

<i>Access channel</i>	<i>1970-80</i>		<i>1977-80</i>	
	%	No	%	No
Homeless	9.5	14	10	3
Waiting list	38	56	57	17
Decants	18	26	3	1
Transfers	25	36	20	6
Other	9.5	14	10	3
	100	146	100	30

12.14 As can be seen from Table 12.6 below, the level of homeless allocations to Stonebridge and of waiting list allocations to Holly Street between 1977 and 1980, was much higher than the proportions which these groups respectively represented among all allocations made by Hackney over this period.

**Table 12.6 Allocations Between December 1977 and December 1980, by Access Channel
(Hackney Allocation Statistics)**

<i>Access channel</i>	<i>1977-80</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>
Homeless	17	1204
Waiting list	22	1563
Decants	21	1471
Transfers	20.5	1449
Others	19.5	1373
	100	7060

The ethnic distribution of allocations to Stonebridge and Holly Street within each access channel

12.15 As Hackney’s director of housing pointed out in his 1979 report on Stonebridge to the housing management committee, tenants coming through the access channels with low bargaining power, or allocated only one offer of accommodation, such as waiting list and homeless applicants, were more likely to be allocated to poorer-quality accommodation. The level of representation of these two access channels on Stonebridge and Holly Street would certainly bear out this contention. However, if these were the only factors affecting allocations, it might reasonably be expected that within each channel the proportion of black and white tenants allocated to such estates would reflect their proportion in that access channel as a whole. We therefore examined the ethnic distribution of allocations to these estates for each of the four main access channels, and compared the data with the main survey results already dealt with in Chapters 3 to 6 of this report.

The Stonebridge estate

12.16 In paragraph 12.12 we have recorded that 84 per cent of our Stonebridge sample in January 1981 came either from the homeless or waiting list access channels. As Table 12.7 shows, over the 10-year period 1970 to 1980, nearly two-thirds of the Stonebridge residents who had come through the homeless access channel were black or Greek/Turkish. Between 1977 and 1980, the proportion of black applicants among the homeless allocated to Stonebridge fell, so that during this period, the proportion of ethnic minority tenants among the homeless allocated to the estate was broadly in line with their representation among the homeless applicants in our main survey, the figures for which are given in the right column of Table 12.7.

Table 12.7 Homeless Allocations to Stonebridge Between 1970-80 and 1977-80, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Ethnic origin</i>	<i>1970-80</i>		<i>1977-80</i>		<i>Homeless access channel, main survey 1978-79</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>
White	34	25	51	18	46	89
Black	60	44	40	14	46	89
Greek/Turkish	5	4	9	3	5	11
Other	1	1	0	0	3	6
	100	74	100	35	100	195

12.7 Among the Stonebridge residents in our sample who had come through the waiting list access channel, black and Greek/Turkish applicants were highly represented throughout the 10-year period 1970 to 1980. In particular, in comparison with their proportions among our main survey waiting list

sample, these ethnic minorities were over-represented among the allocations made to Stonebridge from the waiting list at this time. As Table 12.8 shows, between 1977 and 1980, 72 per cent of the waiting list cases allocated to Stonebridge were black or Greek/Turkish, whereas only 50 per cent of our waiting list sample were of these ethnic origins. Also, while 49 per cent of our main waiting list sample were white, only 24 per cent of the Stonebridge residents allocated to the estate from the waiting list between 1977 and 1980 were white.

Table 12.8 Waiting List Allocations to Stonebridge Between 1970-80 and 1977-80 by Ethnic Origin

<i>Ethnic origin</i>	<i>1970-80</i>		<i>1977-80</i>		<i>Waiting list channel, main survey 1978-79</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
White	30	13	24	7	49	96
Black	56	24	55	16	45	89
Greek/Turkish	12	5	17	5	5	10
Other	2	1	4	1	1	2
	100	43	100	29	100	197

The Holly Street estate

12.18 Tables 12.9 and 12.10 similarly show the ethnic distribution of residents on Holly Street who came through the waiting list and homeless access channels respectively between 1970 and 1980 and 1977 and 1980. They compare these results with ethnic distribution within the homeless and waiting list samples in our main survey. A degree of caution is required in looking at the Holly Street figures as, in some cases, the numbers involved were very small. However, between 1977 and 1980, 71 per cent of Holly Street residents who came through the waiting list were black, although only 45 per cent of our waiting list sample were black, and all the residents who came through the homeless, decant and transfer channels were black.

Table 12.9 Waiting List Allocations to Holly Street Between 1970-77 and 1977-80, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Ethnic origin</i>	<i>1970-80</i>		<i>1977-80</i>		<i>Waiting list access channel, main survey 1978-79</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
White	48	27	29	5	49	96
Black	50	28	71	12	45	89
Greek/Turkish	2	1	0	0	5	10
Other	0	0	0	0	1	2
	100	6	100	17	100	197

Table 12.10 Homeless Allocations to Holly Street Between 1970-80 and 1977-80, by Ethnic Origin

<i>Ethnic origin</i>	<i>1970-80</i>		<i>1977-80</i>		<i>Homeless access channel, main survey 1978-79</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
White	7	1	100	3	46	89
Black	72	10	0	0	46	89
Greek/Turkish	14	2	0	0	5	11
Other	7	1	0	0	3	6
	100	14	100	3	100	195

The effect of family type on allocations to the estates

12.19 Both estates contained a variety of differently-sized accommodation, particularly one, two and three-bedroom property, which would have been suitable for all but very large households. There was, therefore, no reason connected with the size of accommodation on the estates which would have made them a more appropriate allocation for the family types in which black tenants were proportionately more highly represented, for example, single parent families and large ones. We nevertheless found that black single parent families had been allocated to both estates at disproportionately high levels and, on Stonebridge in particular, that the vast majority of these black single parent families had come through the homeless channel.

Family types on Stonebridge

12.20 As Table 12.11 shows, between 1970 and 1980 more than a third of all the family types allocated to Stonebridge were single parent families, although NDHS data showed that single parent families made up only eight per cent of all family types in the Council sector in Hackney. Furthermore, among all the single parent families allocated to Stonebridge over this period, black tenants were greatly over-represented. Of the 47 single parent families allocated to the estate, 36 were black, that is 77 per cent, and only 23 per cent were white. By contrast, NDHS data on the Council sector in Hackney showed that within the single parent family type, only 51 per cent were black and 41 per cent white.

Table 12.11 The Distribution of Family Types, by Ethnic Origin (Stonebridge)

Family type	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pensioners	1	1	4	2	2	3
Other households, including						
single persons, no children	21	17	35	19	26	36
1 adult with 1 or 2 children*	33	27	13	7	25	34
1 adult with 3 + children*	11	9	7.5	4	10	13
2 + adults with 1 or 2 children	19	16	33	18	25	34
2 + adults with 3 + children	15	12	7.5	4	12	16
	100	82	100	54	100	136

*single parent families

12.21 We had already established that more than half the residents allocated to Stonebridge between 1970 and 1980 came through the homeless channel and, when we examined the distribution of family types by ethnic origin among the families allocated to Stonebridge over this period, we found that 35 of the 47 single parent families allocated to the estate had in fact come through the homeless channel. Of these 35 homeless single parent families, 27 or 77 per cent were black and 23 per cent were white. Once again, this level of black representation among homeless single parent families was much greater than could have been expected from the distribution of family types within the homeless category in our main sample survey, where 59 per cent of single parent families were black compared with 41 per cent of whites. While the low bargaining power of homeless families and Hackney's policy of making them only one offer might explain why such a high proportion of single parent homeless families were allocated to Stonebridge, these factors did not explain why black, single parent homeless families were so over-represented among this group.

Family types on Holly Street

12.22 When we examined the distribution of family types in our sample of Holly Street's population, we found that nearly a third of the black tenants in our sample were single parent families compared with only four per cent of white tenants. Among all the single parent families in our sample who had been allocated to Holly Street between 1970 and 1980, 87 per cent were black. These results could not be explained either by the design of the estate, the relative bargaining power of particular groups or the distribution of family types within the ethnic groups in our samples.

Table 12.12 The Distribution of Family Types by Ethnic Origin (Holly Street)

Family type	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Pensioners	2	1	23	17	13	18
Other households including single persons, no children	20	13	34	25	27	38
1 adult with 1 or 2 children*	25	16	3	2	13	18
1 adult with 3 + children*	6	4	1	1	4	5
2 + adults with 1 or 2 children	28	18	24	18	26	36
2 + adults with 3 + children	19	12	15	11	17	23
	100	64	100	74	100	138

* single parent families

12.23 Our examination of Stonebridge and Holly Street so far shows that, although on both estates about half the population in January 1981 were of ethnic minority origin, there were differences between both in terms of the time periods over which these populations grew, and the access channels through which they mainly came. Among our sample of Stonebridge's population, a relatively high proportion of ethnic minorities had been allocated to the estate throughout the 1970s. Among our sample of Holly Street's population, whites formed two-thirds of tenants allocated in the first five years of the decade but, as the estate deteriorated, the proportion of black allocations increased, and of tenants allocated there between 1977 and 1980, three-quarters were black. With regard to the access channel through which tenants came, the majority of allocations to Stonebridge came through the homeless channel, with a significant proportion through the waiting list. On Holly Street, the largest group came through the waiting list and only a relatively small proportion through the homeless channel. Among both the homeless and waiting list channels, black single parent families were particularly highly represented. The proportion of ethnic minorities allocated to Stonebridge and Holly Street from both these access channels was considerably greater than their representation in our main access channel survey, and within the single parent family type. So, although low bargaining power or only one offer of accommodation might explain why homeless and waiting list applicants overall were highly represented on these estates, these factors did not explain why for tenants allocated from within these two access channels, black tenants, and particularly black single parent families, were over-represented. In Chapter 13 we will go on to examine the other factors which might have influenced allocation decisions.

13. THE ESTATES AND THE ALLOCATION PROCESS

13.1 In Chapter 12 we analysed our samples of the estates' populations in January 1981 in terms of their ethnicity, family types, period of allocation and the access channels through which they came. As with our study of the four main access channels, we shall now go on to examine the variety of other factors which may have influenced allocation decisions, irrespective of race or colour, to determine the extent to which any of them played a part in creating the high levels of ethnic minority representation on these two difficult-to-let estates. These factors include the incidence of low demand lettings; rent arrears and the reasons for homelessness on Stonebridge; officers' assessments of housekeeping standards and their recommendations on tenants' suitability for particular types of property; tenants' preferences for particular areas; and offer and refusal rates.

The effect of low demand lettings on allocations to Stonebridge and Holly Street

13.2 A significant proportion of our samples of Stonebridge's and Holly Street's populations had come through the waiting list access channel. As we have explained in Chapter 3, between 1977 and 1980, rather than have accommodation left empty, it was Hackney's policy to offer some difficult-to-let properties to waiting list applicants who had insufficient points to merit a normal allocation. If significant numbers of allocations to either estate had been made to black tenants under such circumstances, this could have accounted in part for their over-representation on the estates. We therefore examined allocations made between 1977 and 1980 to determine what points levels the tenants in our samples had at the time of their allocation and compared these results to the normal level needed for rehousing from the waiting list at that time. Only 12 tenants allocated to the estates from the waiting list had less than the normal points level prevailing at the appropriate time, and taking account of these allocations did not alter the pattern of black waiting list applicants being allocated to both estates in disproportionate numbers.

The effect of rent arrears on allocations to Stonebridge and Holly Street

13.3 The importance which Hackney, in common with many other local authorities, attaches to tenants paying their rent regularly has already been mentioned in Chapter 8. If people were in arrears with rent prior to their allocation, this could have had a detrimental effect on the quality of the property offered to them, irrespective of their racial group.

The Stonebridge estate

13.4 On Stonebridge, our findings showed that black tenants were more likely than white ones to have had a regular rent record before their allocation to this estate, and 71 per cent of black tenants had had a regular rent record compared with 60 per cent of whites. This pattern was accentuated in the years from 1977-1980, when 52 per cent of white tenants had had an irregular rent record compared with 20 per cent of blacks. Rent arrears did not, therefore, explain why black tenants were over-represented on Stonebridge. We shall make further references to the subject of rent arrears in relation to Stonebridge in paragraphs 13.6 and 13.7, when we examine the reasons for homelessness among some of the tenants in our sample.

Table 13.1 Rent Record of Tenants Prior to Allocation, by Ethnic Origin (Stonebridge)

1970-80						
Rent record	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Regular payments	71	41	60	32	66	73
Irregular payment	29	17	40	21	34	38
	100	58	100	53	100	111

1970-80						
Rent record	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Regular payments	80	20	48	10	65	30
Irregular payments	20	5	52	11	35	16
	100	25	100	21	100	46

The Holly Street Estate

13.5 On Holly Street, a very high proportion of our sample of tenants allocated to the estate between 1970 and 1980 had maintained regular rent records prior to their allocation. A higher proportion of black tenants had had irregular rent records, 12 per cent as compared with two per cent of white tenants, but the actual numbers of such tenants were very small. However, this difference did not explain why blacks received 77 per cent of all allocations to the estate between 1977 and 1980, because, over this period, there was no difference between black and white tenants in terms of their rent record. The difference was located in the previous seven-year period and, as already mentioned, only affected a very small number of tenants.

Table 13.2 Rent Record of Tenants Prior to Allocation, by Ethnic Origin (Holly Street)

1970-80						
Rent record	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Regular payments	88	51	98	69	94	120
Irregular payments	12	7	2	1	6	8
	100	58	100	70	100	128

1977-80						
Rent record	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Regular payments	83	15	83	5	83	20
Irregular payments	17	3	17	1	17	4
	100	18	100	6	100	24

Reasons for homelessness on Stonebridge

13.6 We concentrated our analysis of the reasons for homelessness on Stonebridge because a majority of the tenants in our sample had come through the homeless access channel. This factor was not of major relevance to Holly Street because relatively few homeless families had been allocated there. As Table 13.3 shows, on Stonebridge the main overall reason for homelessness was receipt of notice-to-quit (NTQ) from private landlords. This represented 38 per cent of the total, followed by disputes with family or friends, and NTQs from the GLC, usually because of rent arrears. Nearly half the black sample had received NTQs from private landlords. Among the white sample, the most common reason for homelessness was a NTQ from the GLC which, as we have said, was usually issued because of rent arrears.

Table 13.3 Reasons for Homelessness, by Ethnic Origin (Stonebridge)

<i>Reasons for homelessness</i>	<i>Black</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Dispute: family/friend	21	10	12	3	18	13
Illegal letting/squatting	0	0	16	4	6	4
Illegal Eviction	2	1	8	2	4	3
NTQ (private landlord)	50	24	16	4	38	28
NTQ (Hackney)	0	0	4	1	1	1
NTQ (GLC)	12	6	36	9	21	15
Other	15	7	8	2	12	9
	100	48	100	25	100	73

13.7 Because we knew that in Hackney a history of rent arrears could influence the quality of accommodation allocated, we carried out a further analysis to determine why private landlords had issued NTQs and whether these were also because of rent arrears. Our analysis showed that of all the private sector NTQs issued, 22 per cent were as a result of this. However, only 17 per cent of the black tenants in our sample who received NTQs from private landlords had done so because of rent arrears, compared with 60 per cent of our white sample. The other reasons why private landlords issued NTQs involved factors outside the tenant's control, for example, that the landlord wanted to sell the property, or the tenancy agreement had expired.

13.8 We therefore took the view that among reasons for homelessness there was still no 'justification' for blacks receiving a disproportionate number of allocations to Stonebridge. They were not frequently in rent arrears, in either the public or private sector which might have 'justified' allocations to such a poor-quality estate. On the other hand, a relatively high proportion of white tenants had been homeless because of NTQs issued for rent arrears by private landlords and the GLC, which might, in part, explain their allocation to this estate.

13.9 So far, we have been able to discount low demand lettings, rent arrears and reasons for homelessness as factors which explain the high level of representation of black tenants on Stonebridge and Holly Street. As with the general access channel survey, we shall now examine the variables over which the housing officers who carried out home visits exercised their own judgement, that is, housekeeping standards and suitability for particular types of property, and how they influenced allocation decisions.

The effect of housekeeping standards on allocations to Stonebridge and Holly Street

13.10 In the general access channel survey we found marked differences among our waiting list and decant samples in the way black and white tenants had been assessed, with black tenants generally receiving lower grades than white ones.

The Stonebridge estate

13.11 Our results for the sample of Stonebridge's population did not follow the same trend as the main access channels, in that a higher proportion of black tenants had received positive assessments of their housekeeping standards than white one, this being most accentuated over the period 1977 to 1980. Between 1970 and 1980, 32 per cent of black tenants received 'good/excellent' assessments compared

with 18 per cent of white tenants. On the other hand, 55 per cent white tenants received poorer assessments compared with 32 per cent of black tenants. In the last three years, 30 per cent of black tenants received 'good/excellent' assessments compared with 18 per cent of white tenants, although the numbers concerned were small. The relatively high proportion of 'no comments registered', that is, nothing noted on the file, was due to the large proportion of homeless allocations made to Stonebridge. As we have explained in previous chapters, assessments by housing officers were not generally recorded on the files of homeless applicants. The other access channel from which the majority of allocations to Stonebridge came was the waiting list, and the assessment forms filled in by housing officers for these cases contained a specific section on housekeeping standards. The results, set out in Table 13.4 were therefore likely to have related predominantly to waiting list cases. Any assessment of housekeeping standards is necessarily a subjective and possibly unreliable measure but whereas for the white tenants on Stonebridge this particular aspect of the allocation process might in part explain their poor allocation, this conclusion does not hold for the black tenants allocated to the estate.

The Holly Street Estate

13.12 Unlike Stonebridge, the patterns which emerged on Holly Street for all tenants allocated between 1970 and 1980 reflected the results in the four major access channels. Overall, very few tenants, irrespective of race or colour, received poor assessments of housekeeping standards, although black tenants were marginally more likely to have been so graded than whites. However, although the great majority of all tenants received complimentary assessments, when it came to the distribution between 'good/excellent' and the next best grading, white tenants were more likely to have been placed in the former group and black tenants in the latter. However, the differences between blacks and whites for the period 1977 to 1980 were not statistically significant, and did not, therefore, explain why 77 per cent of the allocations during this period were to black tenants.

Table 13.4 Housekeeping Standards, by Ethnic Origin (Stonebridge)

1970-80						
Standards	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
All good/excellent	32	15	18	8	26	23
Mixed comments tending to good	36	17	27	14	36	31
Mixed comments tending to bad	21	10	37	7	19	17
All bad	11	5	18	12	19	17
	100	47	100	41	100	88

Note: No comments registered: black 41; white 53

1977-80						
Standards	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
All good/excellent	60	12	18	2	45	14
Mixed comments tending to good	15	3	27	3	19	6
Mixed comments tending to bad	20	4	37	4	26	8
All bad	5	1	18	2	10	3
	100	20	100	11	100	31

Note: No comments registered: black 14; white 19

Table 13.5 Housekeeping Standards, by Ethnic Origin (Holly Street)

1970-80						
Standards	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
All good/excellent	47	27	68	48	58	75
Mixed tending to good	41	24	25	18	33	42
Mixed tending to bad	12	7	7	5	9	12
All bad comments	0	0	0	0	0	0
	100	58	100	71	100	129

Note: (i) No comments registered: black 6, white 2 (ii) Table significant at a 10 per cent level of confidence

1977-80						
Standards	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
All good/excellent	55	11	66	4	58	15
Mixed tending to good	35	7	17	1	31	8
Mixed tending to bad	10	2	17	1	11	3
All bad comments	0	0	0	0	0	0
	100	20	100	6	100	26

Note: (i) No comments registered: black 3, white 1 (ii) Table not significant

Table 13.6 Recommendations on Suitability for Property Types, by Ethnic Origin (Stonebridge)

1970-80						
Recommendation	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only new	2	1	10	3	6	4
Includes new	44	17	29	8	37	25
Not new: includes late and early post-war	26	10	29	8	27	18
Only pre-war/conversion	28	11	32	9	30	20
	100	39	100	28	100	67

Note: Nothing registered: black 49, white 66

1977-80						
Recommendation	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only new	6	1	11	1	8	2
Includes new	63	10	33	3	52	13
Not new: includes late and early post-war	31	5	45	4	36	9
Only pre-war/conversion	0	0	11	1	4	1
	100	16	100	9	100	25

Note: Nothing registered: black 49, white 21

Recommendations on suitability for property type

The Stonebridge estate

13.13 As Table 13.6 shows, over the 10-year period 1970 to 1980, there were no great differences between black and white tenants, although black tenants were marginally more likely to have received the better grades ‘only new’ and ‘includes new’, than white tenants. Over the period from 1977 to 1980, white tenants tended to receive a greater proportion of recommendations for poorer-quality accommodation than blacks, meaning that black applicants received 31 per cent of the poorer recommendations, the ‘not new’ and ‘only pre-war/conversion’ categories, compared with 77 per cent of white tenants. Although the numbers involved were relatively small, because this recommendation was not made in the homeless cases forming the majority of allocations to the estate, black tenants with relatively much better recommendations than white ones nevertheless ended up on the same poor-quality estate.

The Holly Street estate

13.14 On Holly Street, as Table 13.7 shows, the statistically significant differences between black and white tenants occurred in relation to the years 1970 to 1977, before the 1976 Race Relations Act came into force, and related recommendations in the ‘includes new’ and ‘late/early post-war’ categories; white tenants receiving more of the former and black tenants more of the latter. During the later period, 1977 to 1980, although these differences continued, they were not statistically significant. They did not, in our view, account for the extent of over-representation of black tenants on Holly Street, particularly when, in relation to Stonebridge tenants, the best recommendations had not prevented black tenants being allocated to a poor estate.

Table 13.7 Recommendations on Suitability for Property Types, by Ethnic Origin (Holly Street)

Recommendations	1970-80					
	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only new	15	8	20	13	18	21
*Includes new	46	24	68	44	58	68
*Late/early post war	36	18	12	8	22	26
Only pre-war/conversion	4	2	0	0	2	2
	100	52	100	65	100	117

Note: (i) No recommendations recorded: black 12, white 8
(ii) The differences marked * are significant at a one per cent level of confidence

Recommendations	1977-80					
	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only new	17	3	16.5	1	17	4
Includes new	50	9	67	4	54	13
Late/early post war	33	6	16.5	1	29	7
Only pre-war/conversion	0	0	0	0	0	0
	100	18	100	6	100	24

Note: (i) No recommendations recorded: black 5, white 1 (ii) No significant differences in the table

13.15 Having concluded that housekeeping standards and recommendations for a particular type of property did not explain why black tenants were over-represented on Stonebridge and Holly Street, we finally looked at the factors over which the tenants themselves had some control. Our analysis covers the extent to which tenants’ preferences for particular areas were met, and whether they had sought to improve the quality of accommodation they received by refusing offers.

Tenants' expressed preferences for a particular geographic location

13.16 The data we collected from tenants' files on area preferences covered:

- (a) whether there was any reference on the file to preference areas;
- (b) whether the estate matched one of the preference areas; and
- (c) which preference the area of allocation matched.

The Stonebridge estate

13.17 More than three-quarters of our sample of Stonebridge's population had not been consulted about area preference before their allocation to the estate. This result stemmed from the large number of homeless allocations made to the estate, as homeless families generally were not asked about their preferences during the period covered by our survey. Black tenants were marginally more likely to have had some reference to their preference areas, but the difference was relatively small. Since the great majority of applicants did not have any preference recorded on their files, we concluded that expressed preferences could not have significantly influenced allocations to Stonebridge.

The Holly Street estate

13.18 Among our sample of Holly Street tenants, just over half of both black and white tenants had some preference recorded on their files, and 40 per cent of white tenants had received an allocation which accorded with one of their preferences, compared with 34 per cent of black tenants. White tenants were also more likely than black to have received their first preference area, with 32 per cent of white tenants compared with 22 per cent of black tenants, receiving this. However, this difference was not statistically significant and, since black tenants fared less well than white ones in terms of having their preferences met, these results did not explain the high level of black representation among allocations to Holly Street between 1977 and 1980.

Offer and refusal rates

13.19 We analysed offer and refusal data for our samples of Stonebridge's and Holly Street's populations by the same method as for the general access channel survey, that is, in terms of the number of offers tenants had been allowed, and whether first offers had been accepted.

The Stonebridge estate

13.20 As Table 13.8 shows, 59 per cent of all the tenants in our sample allocated to the estate between 1970 and 1980 had been allowed only one offer. Over this period 72 per cent of black tenants had been allowed this compared with 44 per cent of white tenants. This large difference occurred between 1970 and 1977 because between 1977 and 1980 similarly high proportions of both black and white tenants had been allowed only one offer. Although the large number of tenants who had been allowed one offer was rational, given that the majority of allocations to the estate came from the homeless towards whom Hackney operated its 'one offer only' policy, it still did not explain why such a large proportion of black homeless families had been allocated to the estate in the first place.

The Holly Street Estate

13.21 The pattern on Holly Street was the reverse of that on Stonebridge, as more than three-quarters of the tenants in our sample allocated there between 1970 and 1980 had been allowed more than one offer. As Table 13.9 shows, a higher proportion of white tenants was allowed only one offer during the whole period 1970 to 1980, but between 1977 and 1980, a marginally higher percentage of black tenants than white were in this position. However, the total numbers involved were very small, and did not explain the high level of black allocations to the estate between 1977 and 1980.

Table 13.8 Tenants Allowed Only One Offer or More Than One Offer, by Ethnic Origin (Stonebridge)

1970-80						
Number of offers allowed	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only one offer	72	63	44	34	59	97
More than one offer	28	25	56	43	41	68
	100	88	100	77	100	165

1977-80						
Number of offers allowed	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only one offer	74	25	72	21	73	46
More than one offer	26	9	28	8	27	17
	100	34	100	29	100	63

Table 13.9 Tenants Allowed Only One Offer or More Than One Offer, by Ethnic Origin (Holly Street)

1970-80						
Number of offers Allowed	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only one offer	22	14	5	4	13	18
More than one offer	78	15	95	69	87	119
	100	29	100	73	100	137

1977-80						
Number of offers allowed	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
Only one offer	22	5	29	2	23	7
More than one offer	78	18	71	5	77	23
	100	23	100	7	100	30

13.22 If the black tenants allocated to Holly Street had more frequently accepted the estate as their first offer than white tenants, and had also formed a greater proportion of those tenants who were allowed only one offer of accommodation, these factors might have led to proportionately more black tenants being allocated to this difficult-to-let estate. However, as Table 13.10 shows, over the whole period 1970 to 1980, approximately 80 per cent of both black and white tenants accepted their first offer of accommodation. Between 1977 and 1980, black tenants were in fact less likely to have accepted Holly Street as their first offer when compared with tenants, from which we inferred that, even though Holly Street was a poor-quality estate, for some black tenants it may have represented a degree of improvement over the quality of the first offer they had received.

Table 13.10 Tenants Who Accepted First or Subsequent Offer, by Ethnic Origin (Holly Street)

1970-80						
Which offer accepted	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
First offer	78	50	81	59	80	109
Subsequent offer	22	14	19	14	20	28
	100	64	100	73	100	137

1977-80						
Which offer accepted	Black		White		Total	
	%	No	%	No	%	No
First offer	74	17	100	7	80	24
Subsequent offer	26	6	0	0	20	6
	100	23	100	7	100	30

13.23 In relation to the Stonebridge estate, we inferred from our results that between 1970 and 1980 white tenants had left the estate in relatively large numbers to be replaced disproportionately by black tenants. This trend continued between 1977 and 1980, particularly in relation to applicants from the waiting list. In addition, large numbers of single parent black families had been allocated to the estate. When the factors which might have influenced the allocation process were examined, our results showed that a high proportion of our sample of white tenants allocated to the estate were ‘poor’ tenants as defined by Hackney, that is, they tended to have had rent arrears or to have been made homeless because of eviction for rent arrears, or to have received lower gradings on housekeeping standards. In our view, therefore, there was some rational connection between these poor-standard white tenants and the fact that they were allocated to one of the poorest estates in Hackney. This pattern did not emerge in relation to the black tenants in our sample, that is, they did not have such a high incidence of rent arrears, nor had they received such poor grades.

13.24 The increase in the proportion of black tenants on the Holly Street estate started at a later stage than on Stonebridge, and was most marked between 1977 and 1980. Tenants from the waiting list formed the majority of all allocations to the estate, and of these, 77 per cent were black, although only 45 per cent of our waiting list sample in the general access channel survey were black. Among our sample, all allocations from the other three access channels were to black tenants. Although over the whole period 1970 to 1980 there were some differences between black and white tenants in terms of the assessments of housekeeping standards and recommendations on suitability for property type which they received, these differences occurred in relation to allocations made between 1970 and 1977, and, as with Stonebridge, did not therefore explain the over-representation of black tenants among allocations to Holly Street between 1977 and 1980.

13.25 We concluded that the over-representation of black tenants on these two estates, particularly among homeless and waiting list cases, reinforced the patterns of poorer-quality accommodation being allocated to black homeless and waiting list cases which we had found in our main access channel survey. We therefore used these results on the individual estates as supporting evidence for our findings of unlawful discrimination in relation to the homeless and waiting list access channels overall, which has been dealt with in detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

14. THE ROLE OF THE GREATER LONDON COUNCIL IN HACKNEY'S HOMELESS ALLOCATIONS

14.1 Historically, a large proportion of Hackney's homeless families has been allocated to the GLC property via the GLC homeless quota. This was the case until 1980 when the supply of GLC properties began to decline in conjunction with its change of policy in handing over responsibility for its stock to the London boroughs. After initial opposition, in 1982, the GLC stock was transferred to Hackney, and the borough is currently concerned with developing mechanisms to integrate stock with its own dwellings.

14.2 During 1978 and 1979, the years on which our investigation concentrated its study of allocations, the provision of housing by the GLC to Hackney homeless cases constituted over a quarter of all accommodation allocated to this group. The quota used to rehouse these cases contained the most 'undesirable' GLC properties, many of them in Hackney itself, which was in fact the area to which most of the Hackney homeless GLC cases were allocated. Many of the GLC estates within the borough were arguably among the most unattractive, and it is widely felt that GLC properties are often of even poorer quality than those of the local authority. Also, historically, GLC rents have been set at a higher level than those of Hackney's own properties, which was a further disadvantage to any tenants nominated to the GLC.

14.3 A study by the GLC itself *Colour and Allocation of GLC Housing*¹, had shown that black applicants were allocated to poorer-quality GLC properties and estates than white ones, and this, coupled with the high number of allocations made by the GLC to Hackney homeless cases, led us to examine its role and the implications of this. Our aim was to determine:

- (a) whether a greater number of Hackney ethnic minority homeless applicants had been allocated GLC properties than white homeless applicants;
- (b) if a different pattern was found to have occurred, to establish why this had happened;
- (c) the relative quality of GLC properties allocated to black and white homeless nominations. (Although Hackney were not responsible for the eventual properties allocated to homeless nominees we felt it was important to analyse the GLC system, from the original nomination made by Hackney to the eventual allocation of a property by the GLC.

The system of nomination

14.4 The basic system of the 'treatment' of homeless families was similar, whether they were eventually allocated housing by Hackney or by the GLC. There were similarities in terms of assessment, and provision of temporary accommodation, as has been elaborated in Chapter 4. Some points that are relevant to the GLC, specially, however, are:

- (a) The housing emergency section in Hackney which dealt with homeless cases did not play a part in deciding whether a family should be nominated to the GLC or allocated local property; this decision was made by the allocations section. During the period of our investigation many applicants were both nominated to the GLC and considered for local borough housing. Depending on the amount of GLC property that was available, an applicant would then receive whichever offer came through first.
- (b) There were two groups of homeless cases which were usually *only* nominated to the GLC and consequently *not* considered for local borough housing. Firstly, there were those applicants who were in rent arrears, particularly Hackney's own Council tenants, and squatters. Secondly, there were applicants who did not fulfil Hackney's residential qualifications. The numbers in this category fell when Hackney reduced its residential qualification, to one year, in the early part of 1978. However, with the reduction of available GLC property, particularly after 1980, homeless cases might have been offered permanent local authority housing irrespective of whether they were residentially qualified.
- (c) If the lettings section decided to nominate a homeless case to the GLC, the case papers were referred to a separate officer responsible for all nominations to the GLC and housing associations. Using these, he would complete the nomination form for submission to the GLC, this being the only written information sent to it. This form did not contain specific reference to the ethnic origin of applicants. Once the GLC received the homeless quota form it was passed on to the relevant GLC district office, and offers would be made by the authority as they became available. At that time, the GLC, like Hackney, had a policy of only making one offer to homeless families, and these were sent to homeless applicants via the Hackney housing department.

The results

14.5 The information collected in relation to the sample of GLC homeless nominations included the treatment and the history of applicants prior to the allocation of a property; the proportion of allocations made by the GLC in relation to ethnicity; and the quality of property allocated by racial groups.

14.6 For the first set of data, including reasons for homelessness and the provision and type of accommodation, the results were very similar to those revealed in Chapter 4 for the general homeless access channel survey. That is, there was little difference in the pattern between black and white applicants in relation to those indicators which dealt with the treatment of applicants *prior* to the allocation of properties. The results also showed that the reasons for homelessness for black and white applicants were largely similar for the two groups. There was nothing of substance therefore, in relation to these first set of background factors differentiating applicants allocated GLC rather than local borough property. The differences that did occur related to which racial groups eventually received GLC property, and the relative quality of the properties.

Table 14.1 The Ethnicity of GLC Homeless Nominations Compared With Hackney Local Borough Homeless Allocations

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>GLC allocations</i>		<i>Hackney allocations</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.
Black	33	27	46	89
Greek/Turkish	21	17	5	11
White	46	37	46	89
Other	0	0	3	3
Total	100	81	100	192

The GLC: the number of allocations made between ethnic groups

14.7 Table 14.1 shows the ethnicity of the GLC sample in comparison to that of the homeless sample allocated local borough property. As can be seen, white representation in each of the samples is the same, while black representation amongst the GLC homeless sample is less than in the general access channel survey. The most significant aspect of the ethnic composition, however, is the high representation of Greek/Turkish applicants among the GLC sample. The relevant comparison is that 21 per cent of the GLC sample are of Greek/Turkish origin compared with five per cent of the sample of the general homeless survey.

14.8 Possible reasons for this were examined in relation to the determinant factors of family type and length of residence, Hackney automatically nominate homeless cases with less than a year's residence in the borough, to the GLC. In relation to length of residence, white applicants were in fact found to have been marginally more likely to have lived in the borough for *less* than one year, compared with other ethnic minority groups. The only difference that occurred between Greek/Turkish cases and other groups was that this group of applicants had not lived in the borough for significant amounts of time *over one year*; that is, none of them had lengths of residence of more than five years prior to becoming homeless. However, overall residence was not a factor which Hackney *said* they took into account when making nominations to the GLC. In terms of family type, the patterns that occurred in the general homeless sample were largely repeated. However, a fairly high proportion (41 per cent) of the Greek/Turkish sample was in the large family category.

14.9 Generally, therefore, there were very few different patterns occurring between groups of homeless applicants allocated local authority and GLC properties. However, the high proportion of Greek/Turkish applicants present in the sample has been highlighted, there appearing to be no immediate 'explanation' for such a high concentration. Any explanation might stem from a proposition that housing officers often nominated these families to the GLC because they had not lived in Hackney for long periods of time (at least five years), and that they tended to have larger families which might, in the officers' view use up Hackney's own limited resource of larger properties. However, this type of explanation does not provide any justification for the fact that Greeks and Turks were disproportionately

allocated to the GLC, particularly as this did not relate to the formal policies and practices of the Council.

Properties allocated by the GLC

14.10 During the course of the investigation details were obtained from the GLC itself on the type of dwelling to which applicants were allocated. The data collected included size of estate, age of dwelling, property type, number of storeys in blocks, and number of bedrooms.

14.11 For most of these indicators there was little difference in the pattern between white and ethnic minority applicants. In the main, this was because most of these allocations were to similar properties, many of them of relatively poor-quality, as part of GLC homeless quota housing. Most allocations were two and three-bedroom flats in five-storey blocks, mostly located on medium to large estates. There was, however, a significant difference in the age of properties allocated to ethnic minority and white applicants.

Table 14.2 Age of Dwellings Allocated in Relation to Ethnicity by the GLC

Age	Black		Greek/Turkish		White	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Pre-war (1939)	60	15	47	8	23	7
Post-war	40	10	53	9	77	23
Total	100	25	100	17	100	30

14.12 Table 14.2 shows that the majority of homeless cases received post-war property. There was, however, a substantial difference between black and white applicants, in that 60 per cent of blacks received pre-war properties, compared with 23 per cent of whites, 77 per cent of whom received post-war accommodation.

14.13 The pre-war GLC estates in Hackney are among the poorest-quality properties in the whole of the borough, and in London generally, and we found it very disturbing to see the large number of ethnic minority applicants being allocated to them, and, in the case of black applicants, the large proportion of single parent families. It was difficult, however, to precisely locate the process by which this pattern of allocation happened. As the GLC made the allocations it was responsible in legal terms, but there were problems in determining how and whether it was aware of the ethnicity of applicants. Unlike the situation in Hackney's internal allocations, the GLC did not have complete file details, and would have had to rely solely on the nomination form containing only basic information with no specific reference to ethnicity other than what would have been obvious from names.

14.14 The way that black applicants were allocated to the older GLC properties, and the over-representation of Greek/Turkish applicants in the GLC sample, were the main findings we made in this part of the investigation. These results did concern us, but could not be included in the non-discrimination notice served on Hackney because the borough was not responsible for the allocations made. In addition, we could not include the GLC in any notice because the investigation did not name it in its terms of reference. In some ways, now that Hackney is actually responsible for GLC properties, these results are of an historical nature. However, since they do not appear to be the result of any 'structural' constraints such as residential qualifications, they do highlight the effect of possible officer discretion at key points in the nomination and allocation process. They further highlight the need for record-keeping and monitoring, as well as close supervision and analysis of the exercise of officer discretion. Now that Hackney is responsible for GLC properties and is taking a number of initiatives concerning ethnic minorities for all its housing stock, some of these problems should not be allowed to recur.

14.15 One final point should be made, about the GLC itself. Although it was not the remit of our investigation to examine the GLC, the results of our study appear to suggest that the patterns located in the GLC study of race and housing in 1976, whereby blacks were being allocated to older and poorer-

quality stock, appears to have continued in the following years. While Hackney is now responsible for GLC stock in its area, the GLC continues to have a housing responsibility for London and some areas outside, (if a relatively limited one). It is important, therefore, that it should review its practices and procedures to ensure that allocation is now equitable for all groups of applicants.

NOTE

1. Greater London Council, 'Colour and the Allocation of GLC Housing', Research Report 21, 1976.

PART V

**15. THE ISSUE OF A NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: THE
COMMISSION’S FINDINGS AND THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE**

15. THE ISSUE OF A NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: THE COMMISSION'S FINDINGS AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

15.1 The evidence on which we based our findings in this formal investigation has been fully set out in the preceding chapters of this report. In November 1982, we reached a provisional conclusion, subject to any representations the Council might make, that between June 1977 and December 1981, Hackney had unlawfully discriminated against various persons of West Indian, Asian or African origin (black people), who were rehoused from the Council's waiting list, rehoused as homeless cases, or rehoused as a result of being decanted from their existing accommodation. We provisionally concluded that the treatment accorded by the Council to these people contravened Sections 20(1)(b) and/or 20(1)(c) read together with Section 1(1)(a) of the Act. The basis of this is set out in Appendix D: 'by refusing or deliberately omitting to provide them with housing accommodation, of a like quality to that afforded to white persons in similar need of housing . . . and in relation to lists of persons in need of Council accommodation'.

15.2 In December 1982, we informed the Council that we were minded to issue a Non-Discrimination Notice on the basis of our provisional findings, the substance of which was summarised in a letter to it, reproduced in full below:

Discrimination: with regard to waiting list applicants

(i) The Commission examined a random sample of allocations made to waiting list applicants during the period January 1979 to December 1979. The sample totalled 197 allocations out of the 1,313 allocations made to waiting list applicants over this period. Of these 197 allocations, 96 (or 49 per cent) were to white applicants and 89 (or 45 per cent) to black applicants.

(ii) The results of this sample survey showed that a larger proportion of white applicants was allocated houses and maisonettes when compared with black applicants, a larger proportion of whom were allocated to flats. Among white applicants, 16 per cent received houses, 19 per cent maisonettes and 65 per cent flats, whereas among black applicants four per cent received houses, 11 per cent maisonettes and 85 per cent flats. The difference in the allocation of houses between black and white applicants is statistically significant at a five per cent level of confidence. The difference between houses and maisonettes on the one hand, (34 per cent of white applicants received these property types compared with 15 per cent of black applicants), and flats on the other, is significant at a one per cent level of confidence. Of all houses, maisonettes and flats allocated to black and white waiting list applicants the distribution was:

- houses: 79 per cent to whites, 21 per cent to blacks;
- maisonettes 64 per cent to whites, 36 per cent to blacks;
- flats: 46 per cent to whites, 54 per cent to blacks.

(iii) The distribution of family types within the waiting list sample did not account for the differences in (ii) above since there were similar proportions of black and white applicants who were either small families with one or two children; or large families with three or more children; or households without children, and pensioners or single persons. When comparisons were made within individual family types, black applicants did worse in every case when compared with white applicants.

(iv) A larger proportion of white applicants (25 per cent) was allocated to accommodation in the 'new' age category compared with black applicants (three per cent) and this difference is statistically significant at a one per cent level of confidence. By comparison, proportionately more black applicants (24 per cent) were allocated to the inter-war estates (Hindle, Wigan, Shacklewell and Nisbet) compared with white applicants (seven per cent) and this difference is also significant at a one per cent level of confidence. In fact, 88 per cent of all 'new' property allocated to the waiting list went to white applicants, and 75 per cent of all inter-war estates to black applicants, even though there were almost equal proportions of black and white applicants in the sample.

(v) A larger proportion of white applicants (34 per cent) was allocated to ground or first-floor accommodation compared with black applicants (19 per cent) and the difference is statistically significant

at a five per cent level of confidence. There were broadly similar proportions in both racial groups of the family types who might have required a low floor level, for example, pensioners and families with children, and the difference could not, therefore, be explained by the distribution of family types in the waiting list sample.

(vi) The possibility that the results set out in the paragraphs above might be attributed to differences (other than racial group and family type) which existed between the groups of black and white applicants in the sample, with regard to other factors taken into account in the allocation process (for example rent arrears) was considered. However, such differences as there were did not explain the disproportionate results set out above.

(vii) Of the populations still resident on the Stonebridge and Holly Street estates in January 1981, a larger proportion of black households who came through the waiting list had been allocated to the estates compared with white households from this access channel, in relation to the relative proportions of these racial groups in our sample of waiting list allocations.

Holly Street

(viii) From a random sample of 156 tenants living in the 1,086 units on the estate as at January 1981, 71 (or 46 per cent) tenants were black and 77 (or 49 per cent) white. By comparison, the National Dwelling and Housing Survey showed that overall 15 per cent of Council tenants in Hackney, by head of household, were of West Indian, African or Asian origin, that is, the group described as 'black' in our samples. Of those tenants still living on the estate as at January 1981, the sample showed that in the period 1970-5, that is, shortly after the estate was built and before the problems which have emerged could have been fully identified, allocations to white tenants (63 per cent) were proportionately higher than those to black tenants (31 per cent). Between 1975 and 1977 the ratios reversed, with black tenants forming 57 per cent of allocations compared with white tenants (33 per cent), and of allocations made between 1977 and 1980, 77 per cent were to black tenants and 23 per cent to white tenants.

(ix) During the period 1977 to 1980, of the residents on the estate, black waiting list applicants were proportionately over-represented among allocations to Holly Street estate when compared with white waiting list applicants. Although our sample of the waiting list in general showed that 45 per cent of applicants were black and 49 per cent white, 71 per cent of waiting list applicants allocated to Holly Street between 1977 and 1980 were black compared with 29 per cent who were white. This should be seen against the background that applicants from the waiting list have formed the largest proportion of allocations to this estate, that is, 38 per cent over the whole period 1970 to 1980 and 57 per cent between 1977 and 1980.

(x) Among the tenants living on the estate who were allocated there between 1977 and 1980, there were no statistically significant non-racial factors which might have accounted for the disproportionate level of black allocations over this period.

Stonebridge

(xi) The sample of all tenants living on the estate as at January 1981 totalled 214 out of a total of 310 units of accommodation. The sample showed that as at January 1981, 45 per cent of estate tenants were black and 51 per cent were white, whereas the National Dwelling and Housing Survey showed that overall only 15 per cent of Council tenants in Hackney by head of household were black. Of the residents on the estate in January 1981, black applicants were over-represented among waiting list allocations to the estate when compared with white waiting list applicants allocated there, both over the 10-year period 1970 to 1980 and during 1977 to 1980. Although our sample of waiting list allocations overall contained almost equal proportions of black and white applicants (see point (i) on the waiting list), between 1970 and 1980, 56 per cent of waiting list applicants allocated to Stonebridge were black compared with 30 per cent who were white, and during 1977 to 1980, 55 per cent were black and 24 per cent white. This should be seen against the background that 31 per cent of allocations to the estate between 1970 and 1980 came from the Council's waiting list and between 1977 and 1980 this percentage rose to 39 per cent.

(xii) Such differences as there were between black and white tenants allocated to Stonebridge in relation to other factors affecting allocation decisions did not explain the disproportionate level of allocations. Indeed, with regard to housekeeping standards assessment, more black tenants (60 per cent) had top gradings than white tenants (18 per cent) and more black tenants (69 per cent) were recommended for property which included new property than white tenants (44 per cent).

Discrimination: with regard to homeless applicants

(i) As with the waiting list, a random sample of allocations made to homeless applicants during the period of January 1978 to December 1979 was selected. The sample totalled 195 out of the 962 allocations made to priority need homeless applicants in 1978 and 1979. Of these 195 allocations, 89 (or 46 per cent) were to white homeless cases and 89 (or 46 per cent) to black homeless cases.

(ii) A larger proportion of white homeless applicants was allocated to houses (nine per cent) and to maisonettes (18 per cent) when compared with black homeless applicants, five per cent of whom were allocated houses and 10 per cent maisonettes. The difference between houses and maisonettes on the one hand (27 per cent of white applicants received these properties compared with 15 per cent of black applicants), and flats on the other, is statistically significant at a five per cent level of confidence. Of all the properties allocated to black and white homeless cases, white applicants received 67 per cent of the houses, 64 per cent of the maisonettes and 46 per cent of the flats, whereas black applicants received 33 per cent of the houses, 36 per cent of the maisonettes and 54 per cent of the flats.

(iii) The distribution of family types within the black and white groups in the homeless sample did not account for the results outlined above. Among the family types who were more likely to have been allocated to flats, that is, pensioners or single persons, and among those more likely to be allocated to houses, that is, large families, the proportions of black and white were very similar. When comparisons are made for all family types with children, black applicants do worse in every case than white applicants.

(iv) Whereas no white homeless applicants were allocated above 5th-floor level, eight per cent of black homeless applicants were allocated above this level and this differential is statistically significant at a one per cent level of confidence. Of the seven black homeless applicants allocated above the 5th floor, two families had a child under five years of age, which was contrary to the Council's policy of not housing families with young children above the 5th floor.

(v) As with the waiting list sample, differences other than racial group and family type between the black and white groups in the sample which might have caused the results in paragraphs (ii)-(iv) were examined. However, such differences as there were did not explain the disproportionate results set out above.

Stonebridge

Of the population resident on the estate as at January 1981, black homeless applicants (60 per cent) formed a much larger proportion of the allocations made there between 1970 and 1980 than white homeless applicants (34 per cent). This should be seen against the background that 53 per cent of all allocations to the estate over this period, of the population still living there as at January 1981, came through the homeless channel. There were no significant differences between the racial groups in relation to other non-racial factors which might have accounted for this disproportionate level of allocations.

(vii) It looks from the general pattern of findings and NDHS data that single parent families are over-represented on the estate and that black applicants are over-represented among these. Of residents on the estate as at January 1981, single parent families formed a disproportionate number (33 per cent) of the allocations made over the period 1970 to 1980, when compared with NDHS data, which showed that generally in the Council sector in Hackney, single parent families represented eight per cent of all family types. Within the single parent family types allocated to the estate, black families were disproportionately represented, with 73 per cent being black and 22 per cent white. The NDHS data on the Council sector in Hackney showed that within the single parent family type, 51 per cent were black and 41 per cent white. The results of the Stonebridge sample showed that the majority of the single parent families allocated to the estate came from the homeless access channel, and that black single parent homeless families constituted 77 per cent of these compared with 23 per cent for white single parent homeless families. In comparison, our sample of allocations to the homeless access channel generally showed that 59 per cent of single parent families were black and 41 per cent white.

Holly Street

(viii) Homeless allocations to the Holly Street estate formed a relatively small proportion of the total allocations made to the estate over the period 1970 to 1980, with 9.5 per cent coming from this access channel. However, of the population still resident on the estate in January 1981, 72 per cent of all homeless allocations made between 1970 and 1980 were to black homeless applicants, and over the period

1977 to 1980, although the actual numbers were very small, all homeless applicants allocated to the estate were black.

Discrimination: with regard to decant cases

(i) The random sample of decant cases allocated housing during the period January 1978 to December 1979 produced 243 cases out of the 1,145 allocations made to decant cases during 1978 and 1979. Of these 243 allocations, 99 (or 41 per cent) were to black cases and 133 (or 54.5 per cent) were to white cases.

(ii) A larger proportion of white decant cases (54 per cent) was allocated property in the 'new' category compared with black decant cases (35 per cent), whereas a larger proportion of black decant cases were allocated acquired property (30 per cent), compared with white cases (12 per cent). These differences were both significant at a one per cent level of confidence.

(iii) The possibility that differences in the distribution of family types between the groups of black and white tenants in the decant sample could explain this difference was examined because there were considerably more large black families in the sample (32 per cent) than large white families (13 per cent). Since large families were more likely to be allocated houses, and as the majority of acquired stock allocated to decants was houses, it was possible that this factor could have led to the result set out in paragraph (ii). The distribution of property type by age coding between the black and white decant cases was, therefore, examined separately for houses, maisonettes and flats. These results showed that the one per cent level of confidence of statistical significance in the allocation of new and acquired property resulted from the pattern of allocation to flats, and not to houses and maisonettes. Among the decant cases allocated to flats, 45 per cent of white tenants received new property compared with four per cent of black tenants, and 32 per cent of black tenants received acquired flats compared with five per cent of white tenants. In relation to maisonettes, white decant cases (70 per cent) were more likely than black ones (40 per cent) to have been allocated new maisonettes, although this difference was only significant at a 10 per cent level of confidence. There were no significant differences between black and white decant cases with regard to the allocation of houses in the new or acquired age categories.

(iv) The data on tenants' rent payment histories showed that black decant cases (47 per cent) were less likely than white (71 per cent) to have maintained a regular rent record, and this difference was significant at a one per cent level of confidence. The possibility that this might have explained why white tenants received proportionately more new property was taken into account by looking separately at those decant cases who had regular and irregular rent payment records. However, 63 per cent of white decant cases with regular rent records received new allocations compared with 41 per cent of black decant cases with regular rent records.

(v) As with the waiting list and homeless samples, differences other than racial group, family type and rent payment history between the black and white groups in the sample which might have caused the results set out in paragraphs (ii)-(iv) were examined. However, such differences as there were did not explain the disproportionate results set out above.

Decant cases, waiting list and homeless applicants: the determination of ethnicity

The Commissioners recognised that it might be argued that the housing officers responsible for allocating property would not know the ethnic origin of applicants and tenants when making offers of accommodation. However, it was significant that, although the Council has not yet introduced a standardised system for recording and monitoring the ethnic origin of all housing applicants and tenants as part of an equal opportunity policy, the Commission officers were able, solely from the information recorded on tenants' files, to correctly identify the ethnic origin of 60 per cent of all black applicants and tenants in our samples. For those cases where the ethnic origin was correctly identified, 48 per cent were as a result of specific references to ethnic origin on files, 14 per cent as a result of specific references plus Commission officer deductions, and 37 per cent as a result of Commission officer deductions only, including deductions based on names alone. This level of information was, therefore, available to officers responsible for allocations, and in some cases they may also have had direct contact with tenants and applicants or discussed cases with other officers who had such contact.

15.3 As well as informing the Council of the evidence on which we were minded to issue to issue a non-discrimination notice, we also informed them that compliance with such a notice would require them to make the following changes in their practices or other arrangements. These were:

(a) Make arrangements to record the ethnic origin of all persons applying for housing and being rehoused by the Council, and to analyse these records at quarterly intervals in relation to:

- (i) the quality of accommodation offered, measured in terms of the type of property, age of property and its floor level or some other measure of quality to be agreed with the Commission;
- (ii) the quality of accommodation finally allocated if different from that offered above;
- (iii) allocations to those estates, or parts of estates, which the Council knows are 'difficult-to-let';

and to report the results to a Council committee.

(b) to make arrangements for a review of the procedures and practices operated and the criteria used in assessing which applicants/tenants will be offered which available property, to ensure that they are clearly defined, reliable and relevant to housing needs and applied equally to all housing applicants/tenants.

(c) to make arrangements to provide guidance and training to all staff concerned with visiting housing applicants/tenants and making allocations to them about Sections 20 and 21; how this affects their work with particular respect to:

- (i) completing the record of information to be used by the allocations officers;
- (ii) ensuring that applicants/tenants are equally informed of the options available to them and consulted about their preferences and other special needs;
- (iii) ensuring that only those criteria which have been defined as relevant to allocation decisions as a result of (b) above are recorded;
- (iv) deciding who between a number of competing cases should be offered available accommodation;

(d) to allocate to a senior official in the housing department responsibility for ensuring the Council's compliance with the 1976 Race Relations Act generally and the non-discrimination notice within the meaning of Section 71 of the Act, for the monitoring as appropriate in (a) above, the review in (b) above and the guidance and training in (c) above.

15.4 After receiving notice of our provisional findings in December 1983, Hackney subsequently communicated acceptance of our report and declined to make any written representations, as they were entitled to under the Race Relations Act. Hackney made formal oral representations in April 1983, however, and these took the form of a meeting between Council and Commission officers. The Council's representatives confirmed that Hackney had basically accepted our main findings, but Council officers raised one point on our survey methodology which required further examination. They suggested, in relation to our findings on the waiting list, that the imbalance between black and white applicants in relation to the allocation of houses, maisonettes and flats could have resulted from the fact that there were more black than white applicants requiring two-bedroom accommodation and more white than black applicants requiring three-bedroom accommodation. Since most two-bedroom accommodation was in flats and most three-bedroom accommodation in houses and maisonettes, Hackney suggested that the bedroom size of accommodation needed might, at least in part, have explained why white applicants received more houses and maisonettes and black applicants more flats.

15.5 As a result of Hackney's representations on this point we re-examined our waiting list sample separately for applicants who had been allocated two and three-bedroom accommodation. Among the two-bedroom allocations we found that no-one received houses, but that 97.4 per cent of the black applicants received flats compared with 76.6 per cent of the white applicants, and that 2.6 per cent of the black applicants received maisonettes compared with 16.6 per cent of the white applicants. Indeed, of all the maisonettes allocated to the two-bedroom group, 83.3 per cent went to white applicants compared with 16.7 per cent to black applicants, and of all the flats allocated to this group, 62.3 per cent went to black applicants and 37.7 per cent to whites. Among the three-bedroom allocations, a higher proportion of white applicants received houses (41.9 per cent) compared with black applicants (13.3 per cent) and a larger proportion of black applicants received flats (33.5 per cent) or maisonettes (53.3 per cent) compared with whites (28.5 per cent and 32.2 per cent respectively). Of all the houses allocated to the three-bedroom group, 86.7 per cent went to white applicants and 13.3 per cent to blacks. Similarly, of all the maisonettes and flats allocated to this group, 85.6 per cent and 61.5 per cent respectively went to white applicants compared with 44.4 per cent and 38.5 per cent respectively to black applicants. We considered the results of this further analysis and concluded that it still did not provide an explanation unrelated to racial origin for the distribution of property types included in our provisional findings of unlawful discrimination.

Hackney Council's response

15.6 After receiving our notice of the provisional findings of our investigation, the chairman of the housing committee, Councillor Charles Clarke, in a published statement to the full Council, set the tone for the positive and constructive approach which the Council has subsequently adopted in relation to our findings and requirements. Councillor Clarke said:

I believe that the CRE is setting out on a determined course to establish the secure legal basis which is necessary to fight the racial discrimination that exists in institutions throughout Britain. This is, for example, the first formal investigation by the CRE into public housing. They have made it clear that what is happening in Hackney is most likely the pattern in most urban authorities and hence the study's importance is not only for this borough but for the whole country. It is for that reason as well as for our own purpose in ensuring that discrimination can no longer take place in our own housing policies that I believe that the Council should accept the report fully, should implement its recommendations and should continue to support to the very fullest extent the effort of the CRE in seeking to stamp out racial discrimination.

15.7 The Council during 1983 begun to initiate new policies and procedures and to set up the relevant systems to comply with the requirements of our non-discrimination notice. In response to our requirements the Council informed us of their proposed plans and time-scales in the middle of 1983. The brief details of these are:

(a) The Council had already decided in principle to record the ethnic origin of those seeking or receiving all Council services in December 1982. As far as allocation of housing was concerned, a pilot project was conducted in the middle of 1983 and a comprehensive system was introduced in the latter months of the year. The ethnic question itself is part of the normal application forms filled in by applicants and tenants themselves. A detailed method of assessing the quality of accommodation was also devised during the same period. Hackney hoped that the monitoring system would be operational by the end of 1983 and that the first significant results would then be available, from which further policy issues on methods of allocation could be considered.

(b) Training programmes were introduced during 1983 with an initial emphasis on those staff who were involved in the allocation process. Further plans were made to introduce training on race relations awareness for housing staff generally.

(c) A new post was created at senior management level, the purpose of which is to monitor progress on race relations in the department and to ensure that CRE requirements are complied with by the Council. This officer is also responsible for a review of the procedures and processes of the allocation system in order to ensure that they are not discriminatory, in the light of our results. This officer will also be responsible for subsequent analysis of the results of Hackney's own ethnic monitoring system.

15.8 The Council has also established a special panel composed of members and representatives from voluntary groups representing tenants and ethnic groups, and this is a sub-committee of the housing services committee. While its immediate task was to co-ordinate the Council's response to our non-discrimination notice and to take necessary action, the panel has subsequently expanded its terms of reference to include such important areas as personnel issues, housing management and grants policy. It is the main agency for monitoring the Council's response to our notice, and all relevant reports are considered by it before being submitted to other Council committees. At one of its early meetings the panel and members considered that the Council should move at as fast a rate as possible in responding to the issues raised by our notice, and it was hoped that this rate would be faster than our time-scales.

15.9 As mentioned above, the response of Hackney to our investigation has been very positive, and given the Council's current commitment to the eradication of racial discrimination within the housing department, and the introduction of constructive initiatives in relation to race and housing, we would hope that the department will in future become a model as an example of good policy for other departments throughout the country to follow. We also note that the types of policies on race relations being introduced within the housing department are also being introduced in the other directorates throughout the Council.

15.10 The nature of the investigation, and the detailed examination of the wide range of factors which had to be taken into account before any conclusion that unlawful discrimination was occurring could be reached, underlines both the complex nature of racial discrimination and the difficulty of proving its continuing existence. It would have been virtually impossible for any individual housing applicants or

tenants who believed themselves to have been treated less favourably on racial grounds, to have collected comparative information, even about other housing applications being dealt with at the same time as their cases. It would have been just as difficult for them to establish the foundation for a case which would satisfy a county court. As Councillor Clarke stressed in his statement to the Council on 23 December 1982, we do not believe that Hackney is in any way unique; where other local authorities have undertaken less detailed internal studies of housing allocations, for example in Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham and the GLC, the types of patterns which emerged were similar to those we found in Hackney. We shall, therefore, over the coming months be discussing this report with other local authorities with a view to persuading them to also monitor their housing provision, without the need for concrete proof of the kind we found in Hackney. This will ensure that black people are being treated equally and, where they are not, that changes are introduced.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY REPORT

APPENDIX B: ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION IN THE SAMPLE TYPES

**APPENDIX C: FAMILY TYPES BY PROPERTY TYPE AND
ETHNIC ORIGIN**

APPENDIX D: THE NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

APPENDIX A METHODOLOGY REPORT

Sampling

The original sample consisted of approximately 1,700 Council tenants in Hackney. Nearly all the tenants were Hackney Council tenants, although a small number were GLC tenants living in Hackney. The sample was drawn from records obtained from Hackney housing department. Details of the sub-groups in the sample and the way in which each was drawn are given below.

Access channel samples

Housing is allocated via a number of different routes and these are termed access channels. The access channels distinguished for sampling were:

- (i) Waiting list: tenants housed from the waiting list;
- (ii) Transfer: tenants who had been transferred from another Council property;
- (iii) Homeless: tenants who were previously homeless and had been housed on this basis;
- (iv) Decant: tenants who had been allocated housing because their previous homes had been cleared or modernised.

The access channel samples were drawn randomly from a computer print-out supplied by Hackney housing department. The print-out showed the names and addresses of all tenants who had been allocated housing in Hackney from January 1978 to December 1979, together with the relevant access channel for each tenant. The size of the drawn sample and sampling frame for each access channel were as follows:

Waiting list: 250 drawn from a possible 1313;
Transfer: 250 drawn from a possible 962;
Homeless: 250 drawn from a possible 821;
Decant: 300 drawn from a possible 1145.

GLC homeless sample

A sample was drawn from among tenants who had previously been homeless and who had been housed in GLC housing within Hackney. The sampling frame was all tenants who had been allocated GLC housing from January 1978 to December 1979, and names and addresses were drawn from the GLC allocation book, kept by Hackney. An approximate 40 per cent sample, totalling 119 tenants, was drawn.

Individual estate samples

A sample was drawn from among tenants on two housing estates in Hackney. In both cases the sampling frame consisted of all tenants on the estate, regardless of the date of allocation and the access channel by which they had been given their housing. A computer print-out was supplied by Hackney to the Commission, showing the names and addresses of all tenants on the two estates, and samples were drawn by the Commission. The two estates were:

Stonebridge estate (population 306 households), on which every tenant was sampled;
Holly Street estate, on which 200 tenants were drawn randomly from a possible 1,068.

Re-sampling

The *final* sample was marginally different from the original one in that some limited re-sampling was required. The reasons for this were:

- (a) that some of the original sample were used for pilot interviews;
- (b) that some tenants originally sampled in the access channels were later included in the Stonebridge and Holly Street surveys and were therefore dismissed from the access channel survey;
- (c) administrative errors; meaning that a number of tenants' names and addresses had not been correctly recorded on the computer;
- (d) that a small number of tenants had been incorrectly included as part of the waiting list sample,
- (e) that a number of tenants had moved or died in the time between the original tenant computer print-out being produced by Hackney, revealed when checks were undertaken to ensure that tenants were

Table A.1 Response by Sample Type

Sample type																								
01		02		03		04		05		06		07		08		09		10		11		Total		
Addresses	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Issued	249		253		250		119		306		199		46		203		21		27		9		1682	
Found to be out of scope	2		-		4		9		22		1		1		3		-		1		-		43	
Assumed to be out of scope	-		1		-		1		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		2	
Total out of scope	2		1		4		10		22		1		1		3		-		1		-		45	
Total in scope	247		252		246		109		284		198		45		200		21		26		9		1637	
Found to be out of scope	2		4		-		8		1		1		-		1		-		-		-		17	
Assumed to be out of scope	-		1		2		4		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		7	
Total out of scope	2		5		2		12		1		1		-		1		-		-		-		24	
Total in scope	245		247		244		97		283		197		45		199		21		26		9		1613	
Interviewed	196		202		198		81		215		156		42		161		13		21		7		1292	
Not interviewed	49		45		46		16		68		41		3		38		8		5		2		321	
Reasons for non-response (summary)																								
- not contacted	32		13		23		8		39		22		11		24		8		4		2		190	
- refused	14		6		14		6		21		16		8		12		-		1		-		104	
- other reasons	3		1		5		2		8		3		2		2		-		-		-		27	

correctly matched with their addresses. The reasons why tenants had moved were carefully examined to ensure that no bias would be caused by this in any re-sampling. These included a limited number of Council transfers in Hackney; with movement out of Council accommodation to other parts of Hackney, Britain or abroad; evictions; 'moonlight flits'. We concluded after this examination that these reasons, applied with the relatively small numbers involved, would not lead to any bias in re-sampling.

The details of the *final* samples in terms of the numbers of tenants interviewed and the reasons for non-response are given in Table A.1:

Eligibility for interview

For the access channel and GLC homeless samples, in terms of the administration of the questionnaire the sampling unit was basically the named tenant. Interviewers were instructed to check that the name of the tenant at the time of the interview was the same as the name on the sample issue sheet. If a change of tenancy had occurred, interviewers were instructed not to carry out an interview. Once the tenant's name had been checked, interviewers were instructed to interview whoever had had most dealings with the Council before the move into the present accommodation. It was assumed that in most cases this would be the named tenant or the named tenant's spouse. In the case of the individual estates, the tenants included in the sample were those who were living at the particular address that had been randomly sampled from all the addresses on the estate, and in the case of Stonebridge this was a 'census'. Interviewers were given the names of tenants as well as their addresses, but were instructed to carry out an interview at the address even if there had been a change of tenancy. Only files that related to tenancies at the time of interview were reviewed and so the interview data as well as file information were correctly matched.

The tenant survey

The tenant survey interviews were carried out by Social and Community Planning Research and whilst there were some differences in the questionnaire between the different sample groups, most of the questions were fairly common. The questionnaire used for the waiting list, transfer and decant cases is shown in pages 119-132.

Pilot stage

A small-scale pilot was conducted between 8 and 14 December 1980. The sample was drawn from Hackney's records and covered all the sample types included in the main fieldwork. These interviewers worked on the pilot, and attended a half-day briefing on 8 December and a half-day debriefing on 14 December. The debriefing session was also attended by researchers from the Commission. Each interviewer was issued with 12 addresses and a total of 30 interviews was achieved.

Main survey fieldwork

The interviewing was carried out by 43 interviewers between 16 January and 23 February. The fieldwork period was kept relatively short in order to minimise the opportunity for residents on the estates to discuss the questionnaire with one another before all the interviewing had been completed. This was felt to be a particular problem. Interviewers were therefore asked to cover all addresses on the Holly Street estate between 17 and 23 January, and all addresses on the Stonebridge estate between 24 and 30 January. Two one-day briefing conferences were held, one on 14 January and one the following day. Both were conducted by the SCPR researcher responsible for the survey. Interviewers were provided with supplies of an explanatory letter on SCPR-headed paper and were asked to give a copy of this letter to each respondent after the interview. Interviewers were particularly requested not to hand the letter to respondents until after the interview, and to try and introduce the survey without mentioning the Commission, as it was feared that mention before the interview might bias respondents' replies.

Supervision

Thirty-one interviewers were accompanied in the field between 16 January and 6 February 1981. A total of 62 interviews, 4.8 per cent of those carried out, was conducted under supervision. The work of 28 interviewers was checked by personal recall. This involved a senior interviewer experienced in quality control checks calling back at addresses previously covered during fieldwork. Personal recalls were issued for 286 addresses, and 222 of these were successfully checked. This represents an attempted check

on 17% of issued addresses, a successful check on 13 per cent of issued addresses and a successful check on 16 per cent of productive addresses.

Data handling and statistical analysis

Data was provided from two sources: a tape from SCPR containing the productive results of the survey and completed data sheets compiled from the local authority files and computer by the Commission. Analysis of the productivity of the survey has already been referred to. This data was merged, and the basic data handling and tabulations made using the statistical programme Genstat 4.03 run on a Prime computer. Further analysis of a series of selected three-way tables was made using GLIM 3. These were tested for conditional dependence, conditioning on the single factor family type, using 'deviance' in a log-linear modelling of the table. The stratifying factor bedroom category was highly related to this conditioning factor, and thus implicitly included in the table. Where conditional dependence was found in the three-way table, the constituting two-way tables were then tested for relationship of ethnicity and a housing quality indicator, for each family type, using a programme written in basic run on a PET microcomputer. This used a classical Chi-squared goodness of fit statistic. For validity of the Chi-squared approximation, a minimum expected cell count of one, and average expected cell count of five, was maintained. As was the rest of the analysis, this was generally in accord with the recommendations of Fienberg (1980).

Notes

GENSTAT (4.03) Rothamstead Experimental Station, Harpenden, 1980

GLIM 3, Royal Statistical Society/NAG, Oxford, 1978

S. Fienberg, The Analysis of Cross-Classified Categorical Data, MIT, 1980

(Questionnaire follows on next page)

HOUSING IN HACKNEY

(Waiting list, Transfer and Decant Samples)

Sample Type No.

--	--

(301-2)

Sample Number

--	--	--	--

(303-6)

Card

0	3
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(307-8)

Introduction:

READ OUT IF RESPONDENT WAS NOT INTERVIEWED WHEN CONTACT SHEET WAS FILLED IN.

I am from Social and Community Planning Research which is an independent research organisation. We would like to find out about the way that Hackney Housing Department decide who gets what Council housing. The Council know that we are carrying out this survey but we are not carrying out the survey on their behalf and the Council will not be told about anything that you personally say in the interview.

I gather that you are the person who had most dealings with the council before you moved in.

Do you remember a particular time, <u>before</u> you moved in here, when someone from the Council filled in a form and asked for details about you and your household and the sort of home you wanted ?	(309) Yes 1 No 2	Q.9
IF 'YES' AT a)		
b) And was it you that they spoke to or was it someone else in the household ?	Respondent 1 (310) Someone else 2 (311)	Q.2
MORE THAN ONE CODE MAY BE RINGED		
IF <u>NOT</u> RESPONDENT AT b) - <u>CODE 1 NOT RINGED</u>	(312)	
c) Who did they speak to ?	Head of household 1 Housewife 2 Other (SPECIFY RELATIONSHIP TO HOH) 3	
Did the person from the Council come to your previous home to ask the questions, did you/did _____ go to the Council offices or was the meeting held somewhere else ?	(313) At previous home 1 At Council offices 2 Somewhere else 3 DK/CR 8	

		Col./ Code	Skip to
<u>SHOW CARD A</u>			
On that occasion when the form was filled up did you/did _____ speak to any of the people listed on this card ?		Housing visitor 1 (314)	
		Estate superintendent 2 (315)	
Someone from your <u>local District Housing Office</u>		3 (316)	
MORE THAN ONE CODE MAY BE RINGED	Someone from the <u>main Housing Department</u> (Next to the Town Hall on the corner of Mare Street and Reading Lane)	4 (317)	(318- SPAR
Other (SPECIFY) _____		7 (320)	
(DK/CR)		8 (321)	
4.a)	Still thinking of that particular day when the form about housing was filled up, were you/was _____ asked whether you/they wanted to live in a particular part of the borough of Hackney ?	(322-24)	SPAR
		(325)	
	Yes 1		
	No 2		
	DK/CR 8		
b)	And, at the time of the meeting, did you/_____ tell the person from the Council that there was a particular part of the borough of Hackney that you would prefer to live in?	(326)	
	Yes 1		
	No 2		Q.
<u>IF 'YES' AT b)</u>			
c)	Is your home here in an area you /_____ said you would prefer at the time of the meeting ?	(327)	
	Yes 1		
	No 2		

- 3 -

a) On the particular occasion that the form about housing was filled up, were you/was asked if it was important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT a) BELOW.

b) And, at that time, was it important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT b) BELOW.

FOR EACH ITEM 'IMPORTANT' BUT NOT 'ASKED ABOUT' -
CODE '1' AT (b) AND CODE '2' AT (a)

c) And did you/ tell the person from the Council that it was important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT (c) BELOW.

	(a) ASKED ABOUT			(b) IMPORTANT		(c) TOLD COUNCIL		
	YES	NO	DK	YES	NO	YES	NO	
... near schools?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(328-30)
... near your, or another household member's, place of work?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(331-33)
... near a doctor, hospital or other health facility?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(334-36)
... near shops?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(337-39)
... near a park or other open space?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(340-42)
... near public transport?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(343-45)

6.a) And on that particular occasion when the form about housing was filled up, were you/was _____ asked if it was important for you to be ...
READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT a) BELOW.

b) And, at that time, was it important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT b) BELOW.

FOR EACH ITEM 'IMPORTANT' BUT NOT 'ASKED ABOUT' -
CODE '1' AT b) AND CODE '2' AT a)

c) And did you/_____ tell the person from the Council that it was important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT c) BELOW.

	(a) ASKED ABOUT			(b) IMPORTANT		(c) TOLD COUNCIL		
	YES	NO	DK	YES	NO	YES	NO	
... on a ground floor or a low floor?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(346-48)
... <u>not</u> in a high rise block?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(349-51)
... in accommodation with a garden?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(352-54)

7.a) And were there any other things that were important to you at that time?

Yes
No

(355)
1
2

Q.8

IF 'YES' AT a)

b) What else was important?
RECORD BELOW. WRITE EACH ANSWER ON A SEPARATE LINE.

c) FOR EACH ITEM RECORDED ASK:
And did you/_____ tell the person from the Council that (READ OUT ITEMS IN TURN) was important to you? RING CODE FOR EACH ITEM.

1. _____
2. _____

TOLD COUNCIL	
YES	NO
1	2
1	2

- 5 -

		Col./ Code	Skip to
Thinking of what was important to you at that time, would you say that ... READ OUT ...			
... the Council gave you exactly the sort of home you wanted		(356) 1	
... or, that the Council took into account what was important to you as much as they could		2	
... or, that the Council took no notice at all of what was important to you when they offered you your present home?		3	Q.15
(Nothing was important to respondent)		4	
IF 'NO' AT Q.1a)		(310-313)	SPARE
SHOW CARD A. Do you remember whether you, or someone else in your household, talked to any of the people listed on this card <u>before</u> you moved into your present home?			
	Housing visitor	1 (314)	
	Estate Superintendent	2 (315)	
MORE THAN ONE CODE MAY BE RINGED	Someone from your <u>local District Housing Office</u>	3 (316)	
	Someone from the <u>Main Housing Department</u> (Next to the Town Hall on the corner of Mare Street and Reading Lane)	4 (317)	(318-19) SPARE
Other (SPECIFY) _____		7 (320)	
	(DK/CR)	8 (321)	
0.a Before you moved here, did anyone from the Council ask you, or anyone else in the household, whether you wanted to live in a particular part of the borough of Hackney?		(322-24)	SPARE
	Yes	(325) 1	
	No	2	
	DK/CR	8	
b Did you, or anyone else in the household, ever tell anyone from the Council that there was a particular part of the borough of Hackney that you would prefer to live in?		(326)	
	Yes	1	
	No	2	Q.11
IF 'YES' AT b)			
c) Is your home here in the area you, or someone else in the household, said you would prefer at that time?		(327)	
	Yes	1	
	No	2	

11.a) Before you moved into your home here were you, or anyone else in your household, asked if it was important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT a) BELOW.

b) And, at that time, was it important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT b) BELOW.

FOR EACH ITEM 'IMPORTANT' BUT NOT 'ASKED ABOUT' -
CODE '1' AT b) AND CODE '2' AT a)

c) And did you, or anyone else in your household, tell anyone from the Council that it was important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT c) BELOW.

	(a) ASKED ABOUT			(b) IMPORTANT		(c) TOLD COUNCIL		
	YES	NO	DK	YES	NO	YES	NO	
... near schools?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(328-30)
... near your, or another household member's, place of work?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(331-33)
... near a doctor, hospital or other health facility?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(334-36)
... near shops?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(337-39)
... near a park or other open space?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(340-42)
... near public transport?	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	(343-45)

2.a) And before you moved into your home here were you, or anyone else in your household, asked if it was important for you to be ...
READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT a) BELOW.

b) And, at that time, was it important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT b) BELOW.

FOR EACH ITEM 'IMPORTANT' BUT NOT 'ASKED ABOUT' - CODE '1' AT b) AND CODE '2' AT a)

c) And did you, or anyone else in your household, tell someone from the Council that it was important for you to be ... READ OUT IN TURN AND RING CODE AT c) BELOW.

(a) ASKED ABOUT			(b) IMPORTANT		(c) TOLD COUNCIL	
YES	NO	DK	YES	NO	YES	NO
1	2	3	1	2	1	2
1	2	3	1	2	1	2
1	2	3	1	2	1	2

... on the ground floor or a low floor?

(346-48)

... not in a high rise block?

(349-51)

... in accommodation with a garden?

(352-54)

3.a) And were there any other things that were important to you at that time?

Yes
No

(355)
1
2

Q.14

IF 'YES' AT a)

b) What else was important?
RECORD BELOW. WRITE EACH ANSWER ON A SEPARATE LINE.

c) FOR EACH ITEM RECORDED ASK:
And did you, or anyone else in your household, tell someone from the Council that (READ OUT ITEMS IN TURN) was important to you? RING CODE FOR EACH ITEM.

1. _____
2. _____

TOLD COUNCIL	
YES	NO
1	2
1	2

		Col./ Code	Skip to
14	Thinking of what was important to you at that time, would you say that READ OUT the Council gave you exactly the sort of home you wanted or, that the Council took into account what was important to you as much as they could or, that the Council took no notice at all of what was important to you when they offered you your present home? (Nothing was important to respondent)	(356) 1 2 3 4	
	ASK ALL <div>OFFERS</div>	(357)	
15a)	At the time you were waiting for a Council house/flat, what was the maximum number of offers you thought would be made ? One offer Two offers Three offers Four or more offers (but limited number) Unlimited number of offers Didn't know	1 2 3 4 5 8	Q16
	IF CODES 1-5 RINGED AT a) b) Why did you think that ? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.		
16a)	When you were first offered this house/flat/maisonette, did you consider refusing it ? Yes No	(358) 1 2	Q17
	IF 'YES' AT a) b) Did you, or anyone in your household, talk to someone in the Housing Department about refusing it ? Yes No	(359) 1 2	Q17
	IF 'YES' AT b) c) Who was that ? Estate Superintendent Someone from respondent's local District Housing Office MORE THAN ONE CODE MAY BE RINGED. Someone from the main Housing Department (next to the Town Hall on the corner of Mare St. and Reading Lane) Other (SPECIFY) _____ (DK/CR)	1 (360) 2 (361) 3 (362) 7 (363) 8 (364)	
	d) What did they say ? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM		

		Col./ Code	Skip to
17	Why did you accept the offer of this flat/maisonette ? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM		
	<div>THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT</div>	(365)	
a)	In the time before you moved into your home here, were the people you talked to in the Housing Department READ OUT <div>..... very helpful, 1</div> <div>..... fairly helpful, 2</div> <div>..... not very helpful, 3</div> <div>..... or not at all helpful ? 4</div> <div>(DK/CR) 8</div>		
b)	In what ways were they helpful/were there any ways in which they were helpful ? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM		
c)	In what ways were they <u>not</u> helpful/were there any ways in which they were <u>not</u> helpful ? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.		

ASK THIS SECTION IF WAITING LIST OR DECANT SAMPLE.
IF TRANSFER SAMPLE GO TO Q.21

TRANSFERS

		Col./ Code	Skip to
19.a)	Did you know that the Council are able to transfer people who need or want to move?	(366)	
	Yes	1	
	IF 'YES' AT a)	2	Q.21
b)	Have you, or has anyone in the household, actually applied for a transfer from this house/flat/maisonette?	(367)	
	Yes	1	Q.20
	No	2	
	IF 'NO' AT b)	(368)	
c)	Since you have lived here, have you seriously considered applying for a transfer?	1	
	Yes	2	
d)	Who should you apply to if you would like to be transferred?	1 (369)	
	Estate Superintendent	2 (370)	
	MORE THAN ONE CODE MAY BE RINGED	3 (371)	
	Local District Housing Office /Officer Main Housing Department (next to the Town Hall on the corner of Mare St. and Reading Lane)	7 (372)	
	Other (SPECIFY) _____ (DK/CR)	8 (373)	
e)	Do you need a special reason in order to be transferred or can you be transferred just because you would like to change your home?	(374)	
	Need a special reason	1	
	Just because want a change	2	Q.21
	(DK/CR)	8	
	IF 'NEED A SPECIAL REASON' AT e)	375-80)	SPARE
		401-6)	As Card
		03	
		407-8)	CARD 04
f)	What special reasons do you need in order to be transferred?	1 (409)	
	Want smaller accommodation	2 (410)	
	Overcrowding	3 (411)	
	Dislike noise/estate/vandalism	4 (412)	
	Housing damp/in bad condition	5 (413)	
	Health (includes old age)	6 (414)	Q.21
	Family connections (eg to move near father/mother)	7 (415)	
	To be near place of work/easy journey to work	1 (416)	
	Social reasons (bereavement, child care problems etc)	2 (417)	
	Problems with neighbours	3 (418)	
	Other (SPECIFY) _____		

		Col./ Code	Skip to
IF ACTUALLY APPLIED FOR A TRANSFER - CODE 1 AT Q19b)			
a)	When was the last time you, or anyone else in the household, applied for a transfer from this house/flat/maisonette ?	(419)	
	Within last 6 months	1	
	More than 6 months, less than 1 year ago	2	
	More than 1 year, less than 2 years ago	3	
	2 years or more ago (RING CODE '4'	4	
	AND GIVE YEAR) 19 <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	(420-21)	
b)	Thinking about the last time that you, or someone else in the household, applied for a transfer, who did you apply to ?		
	Estate Superintendent	1 (422)	
	Local District Housing Office/Officer	2 (423)	
	Main Housing Department (Next to the Town Hall on the corner of Mare St. and Reading Lane)	3 (424)	
	Other (SPECIFY) _____	7 (425)	
	(DK/CR)	8 (426)	
c)	What reason did you give for wanting a transfer ?		
	Wanted smaller accommodation	1 (427)	
	Overcrowding	2 (428)	
	Disliked noise/estate/vandalism	3 (429)	
	Housing damp/in bad condition	4 (430)	
	Health (includes old age)	5 (431)	
	Family connections (eg to move near father/mother)	6 (432)	
	To be near place of work/easy journey to work	7 (433)	
	Social reasons (bereavement, child care problems etc)	1 (434)	
	Problems with neighbours	2 (435)	
	Other (SPECIFY) _____	3 (436)	
	No reason given	4 (437)	
d)	What happened next ? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM	(438)	SPARE

		Col./ Code	Skip to
ASK ALL			
THE ESTATE			
21	How would you describe this estate/immediate neighbourhood ? Is it READ OUT <div> <div>.... a very good place to live</div> <div>.... fairly good</div> <div>.... not very good</div> <div>.... or not at all good ?</div> <div>(Good in some ways/bad in others)</div> </div>	(439) 1 2 3 4 5	
22a)	Is there anything you particularly <u>like</u> about this estate ? <u>PROBE</u> : 'Anything else ?' <u>UNTIL</u> 'No'. RECORD VERBATIM		
b)	Is there anything you particularly <u>dislike</u> about this estate ? <u>PROBE</u> : 'Anything else ?' <u>UNTIL</u> 'No'. RECORD VERBATIM		
23a)	If the Council were to offer you this house/flat/maisonette now, would you still accept the offer ? <div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div> </div> <u>IF 'NO' AT a)</u> b) Why is that ? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM	(440) 1 2	Q24

135

[illegible]

		Col./ Code	Ski to
<u>INTERVIEWER TO RECORD AFTER INTERVIEW</u>			
i	Ethnic origin group of respondent (if interviewer assessment different from answer given at Q.24a)	(450)	
	White/European/Mediterranean	1	
	Black/African	2	
	Brown/Asian	3	
	Other (SPECIFY) _____	4	
ii	Interviewer assessment of respondent's fluency in English	(451)	
	Speaks English - fluently	1	
	fairly well	2	
	slightly	3	
	not at all	4	
iii	Was this interview achieved at the ...	(452)	
	First call	1	
	Second call	2	
	Third call	3	
	Fourth call	4	
	Other (PLEASE WRITE IN) _____	5	
iv	Date of interview Day Month <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> </div> </div>	(453-56)	
v	Signature of interviewer <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 400px;"></div> <div style="text-align: center;"> Interviewer No. <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 10px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> </div> </div> </div>	(457-60)	
		(461-80)	SPA

APPENDIX B ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION IN THE SAMPLE TYPES

Table B.1 gives a detailed breakdown of each of the recorded ethnic groups in terms of their individual sample types. Initially these ethnic groups were re-coded as:

Categories	Classification
Indian, Pakistan, Bangladesh, African Asian African	Asian African
West Indian	West Indian
Greek/Turkish	Greek/Turkish
UK White, Eire, Other European, Jewish	White
Other, South American, Anglo-Indian, Mauritian, Chinese, Malaysian, Singapore Middle East	Other

For the presentation of results, the classifications of African, Asian and Westindian were categorised as Black. The other classifications remained the same.

Table B.1 Recorded Ethnic Groups, by Individual Sample Types

	<i>African</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>Bangladeshi</i>	<i>African-Asian</i>	<i>West Indian</i>	<i>Greek</i>
Homeless	8	7	0	5	1	68	6
Transfer	7	1	0	0	0	40	2
Waiting-list	23	6	2	2	2	54	2
GLC	4	3	1	0	2	17	4
Stonebridge	19	2	0	2	3	70	2
Holly Street	6	6	0	0	0	59	3
Decants:							
Compulsory transfer	0	0	0	0	0	12	0
Council clearance and adaption	6	2	1	1	1	67	0
Slum clearance	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Redevelopment	1	0	0	0	0	4	0
Closing order	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	74	28	4	10	9	392	20

	<i>Turkish</i>	<i>UK white</i>	<i>Eire</i>	<i>Other European</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>South American</i>
Homeless	5	72	9	6	2	2
Transfer	4	127	6	3	3	0
Waiting list	8	82	8	4	2	0
GLC	13	28	7	2	0	0
Stonebridge	11	90	9	4	0	0
Holly Street	2	69	5	3	0	2
Decants:						
Compulsory transfer	2	26	2	0	0	0
Council clearance and adaption	5	70	3	1	0	1
Slum clearance	1	10	0	0	0	0
Redevelopment	1	15	0	0	0	0
Closing order	0	4	1	0	1	0
Totals	52	593	50	23	8	5

	<i>Anglo-Indian</i>	<i>Mauritian</i>	<i>Asian, Malaysian, Middle Singaporean</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Homeless	1	0	2	1	0	195
Transfer	1	0	0	1	3	198
Waiting list	0	0	1	0	1	197
GLC	0	0	0	0	0	81
Stonebridge	0	0	1	0	1	214
Holly Street	0	0	1	0	0	156
Decants:						
Compulsory transfer	0	0	0	0	0	42
Council clearance and adaption	0	2	0	0	0	160
Slum clearance	0	0	0	0	0	13
Redevelopment	0	0	0	0	0	21
Closing order	0	0	0	0	0	7
Totals	2	2	5	2	5	1284

APPENDIX C FAMILY TYPES BY PROPERTY TYPE AND ETHNIC ORIGIN

Tables showing distribution of property types by family type and ethnic origin:

Table C1: Waiting list (text reference: Chapter 3 para 3.29)

Table C2: Homeless (text reference: Chapter 4 para 4.21)

Table C3: Decants (text reference: Chapter 5 para 5.10)

Table C4: Transfers (text reference: Chapter 6 para 6.13)

Table C1: Distribution of Property Types by Family Types and Ethnic Origin (Waiting List)

Family type	Property type	Black		White		Total	
		%	No	%	No	%	No
Pensioners: single and married couples	Flat	100	3	100	2	100	5
	Maisonette	0	0	0	0	0	0
	House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total		100	3	100	2	100	5
Single persons	Flat	93	14	100	17	97	31
	Maisonette	7	1	0	0	3	1
	House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total		100	15	100	17	100	32
Other households/ no children	Flat	97	29	83	24	90	53
	Maisonette	3	1	14	4	8	5
	House	0	0	3	1	2	1
Sub-total		100	30	100	29	100	59
1 adult with 1 or 2 children	Flat	88	15	50	2	81	17
	Maisonette	12	2	25	1	14	3
	House	0	0	25	1	5	1
Sub-total		100	17	100	4	100	21
1 adult with 3+ children	Flat	0	0	50	1	50	1
	Maisonette	0	0	0	0	0	0
	House	0	0	50	1	50	1
Sub-total		0	0	100	2	100	2
2+ adults with 1 or 2 children	Flat	77	10	47	16	55	26
	Maisonette	8	1	38	13	30	14
	House	15	2	15	5	15	7
Sub-total		100	13	100	34	100	47
2+ adults with 3+ children	Flat	40	4	12.5	1	28	5
	Maisonette	40	4	0	0	22	4
	House	20	2	87.5	7	50	9
Sub-total		100	10	100	8	100	18

Table C2: Distribution of Property Types by Family Types and Ethnic Origin (Homeless)

Family type	Property type	Black		White		Total	
		%	No	%	No	%	No
Pensioners: single and married couples	Flat	100	1	100	3	100	4
	Maisonette	0	0	0	0	0	0
	House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total		100	1	100	3	100	4
Single persons	Flat	92	12	100	12	96	24
	Maisonette	8	1	0	0	4	1
	House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total		100	13	100	12	100	25
Other households/ no children	Flat	71	5	86	12	81	17
	Maisonette	0	0	7	1	5	1
	House	29	2	7	1	14	3
Sub-total		100	7	100	14	100	21
1 adult with 1 or 2 children	Flat	79	26	75	15	77	41
	Maisonette	21	7	20	4	21	11
	House	0	0	5	1	2	1
Sub-total		100	33	100	20	100	53
1 adult with 3 + children	Flat	50	1	25	1	33	2
	Maisonette	0	0	25	1	17	1
	House	50	1	50	2	50	3
Sub-total		100	2	100	4	100	6
2 + adults with 1 or 2 children	Flat	96	26	68	19	82	45
	Maisonette	4	1	25	7	15	8
	House	0	0	7	2	3	2
Sub-total		100	27	100	28	100	55
2 + adults with 3 + children	Flat	80	4	37.5	3	54	7
	Maisonette	0	0	37.5	3	23	3
	House	20	1	25	2	23	3
Sub-total		100	5	100	8	100	13

Table C3: Distribution of Property Types by Family Types and Ethnic Origin (Decants)

Family type	Property type	Black		White		Total	
		%	No	%	No	%	No
Pensioners: single and married couples	Flat	100	1	100	15	100	16
	Maisonette	0	0	0	0	0	0
	House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total		100	1	100	15	100	16
Single persons	Flat	100	5	100	14	100	19
	Maisonette	0	0	0	0	0	0
	House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total		100	5	100	14	100	19
Other households/ no children	Flat	38.5	5	53	20	49	25
	Maisonette	23	3	39	15	35	18
	House	38.5	5	8	3	16	8
Sub-total		100	13	100	38	100	51
1 adult with 1 or 2 children	Flat	37	10	20	2	32	12
	Maisonette	44	12	20	2	38	14
	House	19	5	60	6	30	11
Sub-total		100	27	100	10	100	37
1 adult with 3+ children	Flat	11	1	0	0	8	1
	Maisonette	33	3	33	1	33	4
	House	56	5	67	2	59	7
Sub-total		100	9	100	3	100	12
2+ adults with 1 or 2 children	Flat	15	3	13	4	14	7
	Maisonette	30	6	26	8	28	14
	House	55	11	61	19	58	30
Sub-total		100	20	100	31	100	51
2+ adults with 3+ children	Flat	4.5	1	8	1	6	2
	Maisonette	4.5	1	17	2	9	3
	House	91	20	75	9	85	29
Sub-total		100	22	100	12	100	34

Table C4: Distribution of Property Types by Family Types and Ethnic Origin (Transfers)

Family type	Property type	Black		White		Total	
		%	No	%	No	%	No
Pensioners: single and married couples	Flat	100	1	100	18	100	19
	Maisonette	0	0	0	0	0	0
	House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total		100	1	100	18	100	19
Single persons	Flat	100	3	100	16	100	19
	Maisonette	0	0	0	0	0	0
	House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total		100	3	100	16	100	19
Other households/ no children	Flat	57	4	67	24	65	28
	Maisonette	43	3	25	9	28	12
	House	0	0	8	3	7	3
Sub-total		100	7	100	36	100	43
1 adult with 1 or 2 children	Flat	25	2	50	2	33	4
	Maisonette	37.5	3	50	2	42	5
	House	37.5	3	0	0	25	3
Sub-total		100	8	100	4	100	12
1 adult with 3 + children	Flat	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Maisonette	100	1	60	3	67	4
	House	0	0	40	2	23	2
Sub-total		100	1	100	5	100	6
2 + adults with 1 or 2 children	Flat	25	4	10	4	14	8
	Maisonette	44	7	32	13	35	20
	House	31	5	58	24	51	29
Sub-total		100	16	100	41	100	57
2 + adults with 3 + children	Flat	8	1	0	0	3	1
	Maisonette	8	1	32	6	23	7
	House	84	10	68	13	74	23
Sub-total		100	12	100	19	100	31

APPENDIX D: THE NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

(RACE RELATIONS ACT 1976, S.58)

To: The Chief Executive and Town Clerk
The London Borough of Hackney
The Town Hall
Mare Street
London E8 1EA

1. Whereas, in the course of a formal investigation into the London Borough of Hackney ('the Council'), the Commission for Racial Equality ('the Commission') have become satisfied that the Council have committed acts to which Section 58(2) of the Race Relations Act ('the Act') applies, namely:

that between 13 June 1977 and 31 January 1981 the Council, by its servants in the borough housing department, for whose acts the Council is liable under Section 32(1) of the Act, discriminated against various persons of West Indian, Asian or African origin who were rehoused from the Council's waiting list, rehoused as homeless cases or rehoused as a result of being decanted from their existing accommodation:

- in contravention of Section 20(1)(b) read together with Section 1(1)(a) of the Act by refusing or deliberately omitting to provide them with housing accommodation (provision of such accommodation being a service of the local authority) of the like quality to that afforded to white persons in similar need of housing accommodation, and/or
- in contravention of Section 21(1)(c) read together with Section 1(1)(a) of the Act in its treatment of them in relation to lists of persons in need of Council accommodation.

2. And the Commission are of the opinion that further such acts are likely to be committed unless changes are made in the Council's practices or other arrangements as respects:

(a) the need for arrangements to record the ethnic origin of all persons applying for housing and being rehoused by the Council and analyse these records at quarterly intervals in relation to:

- the quality of accommodation offered (measured in terms of the type of property, age of property and its floor level or some other measure of quality to be agreed with the Commission);
- the quality of accommodation allocated if different from that offered above;
- allocations to those estates, or parts of estates which the Council knows are 'difficult-to-let';
- and report the results to a Council Committee.

(b) the need for arrangements for a review of the procedures and practices operated and the criteria used in assessing which applicants/tenants will be offered which available property to ensure that they are clearly defined, reliable, relevant to housing needs and applied equally to all housing applicants/tenants;

(c) the need for arrangements to provide guidance and training to all staff concerned with visiting housing applicants/tenants and making allocations to them about Section 20 and 21 and how this affects their work with particular respect to:

- completing the record of information which will be used by the allocations officers;
- ensuring that applicants/tenants are equally informed of the options available to them and consulted about their preferences and other special needs;
- ensuring that only those criteria which have been defined as relevant to allocation decisions as a result of (b) above are recorded;

(d) the need for allocation to a senior official in the housing department of responsibility for ensuring the Council's compliance with the 1976 Race Relations Act generally and the non-discrimination notice and for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made by the Council within the meaning of Section 71 of the Act, for the monitoring as appropriate in (a) above, the review in (b) above, and the guidance and training in (c) above.

3. Now, therefore, without prejudice to the Council's other duties under the Act, the Council are hereby required, in pursuance of Section 58(2) of the Act, not to commit any such unlawful acts.

4. In so far as compliance with the aforesaid requirements involves changes in any of the Council's practices or other arrangements, the Council are further required in pursuance of the said Section 58(2) to inform the Commission as hereinafter provided that they have effected those changes and what those changes are and to take the following steps for the purpose of affording that information to other persons concerned, namely:

A. to inform the Commission within two months of the non-discrimination notice becoming final that the Council will make these changes within one year or such other period as may be agreed with the Commission;

B. to take the following steps within the period specified below, or such other period as may be agreed with the Commission, for the purpose of affording information about the changes to other persons concerned:

(i) issue to all housing department staff involved in visiting applicants/tenants and allocating accommodation, within one year of the non-discrimination notice becoming final, written notifications informing them of the changes made and arrangements in accordance with 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c) above;

(ii) prepare written guidance to be given to all those applying for housing, within one year of the non-discrimination notice becoming final, on the arrangements to be made in accordance with 2(a) above and the factors defined as a result of the review at 2(b) above.

5. The Notice also requires the Council, pursuant to Section 58(3) of the Act, to furnish the Commission, on dates specified below during the period of five years after the Notice has become final, with the following information to verify that the Notice has been complied with, namely:

(1) to supply within 28 days of its issue, copies of written notifications referred to in 4B(i) above, and the names and positions in the housing department of the employees to whom it was issued, and the dates on which they received it;

(2) to supply within 28 days of the review referred to in 2(b) above being completed details of the procedures and practices to be operated and the criteria to be used in assessing which applicants/tenants will be offered which available property and the arrangements to be made to ensure that they are applied equally;

(3) to supply a copy of each report on the recording and monitoring of ethnic origins referred to in 2(a) above as and when it is put to the appropriate Council Committee for a period of five years after the non-discrimination notice becomes final;

(4) to supply within 28 days of its issue a copy of the guidance to applicants/tenants referred to in 4B(ii) above.

The information to be furnished by the Council to the Commission in pursuance of the notice shall be furnished in writing by ordinary letter post.

Dated the ninth day of May 1983.

This Notice was issued by the Commission, with provisions of Section 58(5) of the Act having been complied with.

(Signed)
P.A. Newsam



KS-660-483